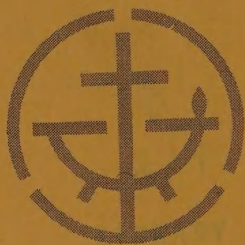


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**DEATH AND THE LIFE BEYOND**



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# DEATH AND THE LIFE BEYOND

IN THE LIGHT OF MODERN  
RELIGIOUS THOUGHT

BY  
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"CHRIST AND CAESAR," "JESUS CHRIST TO-DAY: THE EXILED GOD"  
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## FOREWORD

THE following lectures were delivered on six Tuesday evenings of last winter in the city of Melbourne, to overflowing audiences, which comprised every section of the community. They evoked extraordinary interest amongst all classes. Delivered from notes, they were taken down by stenographers and published weekly in the *Southern Cross*, from which journal they are now, after a certain revision, reprinted. The style, peculiar to spoken utterances, is preserved in the following pages, the author feeling that the many persons who have requested the publication in book form of these lectures would prefer to read them as they were originally delivered. By adhering to this method there is loss as well as gain. Few men can unite to warmth and spontaneity of public address a perfect literary style, and I, certainly, am not of their rare number. If there is a loss from this point of view, I hope that the gain in the other direction will prove to be more than a compensation for it. At least I think I can claim that the lectures are free from that vice of highly-coloured

rhetoric which is the snare of much public speaking. The theme of the following pages is entirely too grave to suffer the indignity of exaggerated language. It demands, above all things, clearness of statement and accuracy of definition.

It is a welcome sign of the times that men are wearying of the Arctic negations of professional rationalists. In France a new religious movement is in progress. Secularism has produced such frightful results in that country—crime having increased to an enormous extent—that men are turning once more to the one thing that can save them—religion. Amongst the English-speaking peoples the new “spiritual” note in recent scientific and philosophic literature is highly significant. The reign of professional rationalism is quickly passing. The enemy to-day is *practical* secularism. The need of the time is an awakening of the conscience of mankind to a realization of the meaning of life: that we are here to live and to continue to live. Such an awakening can alone save us from the abyss.

FREDERIC C. SPURR.

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA,

*Autumn*, 1913.

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# DEATH AND THE HEREAFTER

## THE MEANING OF DEATH





## LECTURE I

# DEATH AND THE HEREAFTER

### THE MEANING OF DEATH

I AM to deal, in six lectures, with the general subject of Death and the Hereafter. In undertaking this task, I am fully aware that I lay myself open to a double charge—that of audacity in daring to discuss a subject concerning which it is declared by many that nothing can possibly be known; and that of irreverence in reopening a question which orthodoxy has settled once and for all. In answer to that possible double charge I declare, in advance, that I am neither audacious nor irreverent. On the contrary, they are audacious who dare to make their agnosticism the measure of all possible knowledge; and they are irreverent who close their minds against restatements

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of old truths, supposing that, because the fathers have spoken, there is nothing further to be said. The time in which we live is one of questioning and unrest; everywhere people are crying for fuller light. Despite the superficial indifference to religion which is apparent in modern life, there is a real deep thirst for certitude on the part

**The Demand  
for Light.**

of an increasing number of people. It is imperative therefore that a Christian apostle, whose one business it is to evangelize men, should endeavour to throw whatever light is available upon this supreme question.

In this spirit I propose to collect all available light from every quarter and focus it upon the great question of "Death and the Hereafter." To true Christians all light is welcome, since all light proceeds from one Divine source. Light cannot contradict light. Truth cannot be opposed to truth. The Christian, of all men, should freely open his mind to light from every source, since he alone is assured of the unity of truth in Christ Jesus. They who are afraid of truth condemn themselves to dwell in the shadows. Lovers of Christ who open their windows

to truth share in the glory of God's ever-growing day.

We deal, then, first of all, with the question of death. There can be only one opinion concerning the fact of death. Physical dissolution is the lot of all man-  
The Fact  
of Death.
kind. It is inevitable. Certain things may be done by proxy; other things may be bought off or evaded. But we cannot elude death. Each man and woman, saint and scoundrel alike, passes through the portal of the tomb. Life, in some respects, is like a game of chess. Upon the board, during the progress of the game, the pieces occupy different positions and possess different values; but when the game is over, all alike, bishops, kings, knights, and pawns, go into the common box. In life here below one man is a king, another a bishop, another a governor-general, another the master of a great business, another a menial—a mere pawn. But when death comes—the great leveller—all men are equal in the solemn stillness of the sepulchre. Death is inevitable; it is also uncertain. No man knows the day or the hour of its coming. Sometimes notice of dissolution is given in sickness or in the natural decay of

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life; sometimes death comes suddenly. But whatever may be the manner of its coming, it is the one experience which befalls the whole race. "Put thy house in order, for thou must die."

There are few people who can contemplate death without emotion; for, to put it in the simplest way and upon the lowest ground, it is the termination of many things that we cherish. It is the termination of our physical beauty. What in creation is more noble than the human body? How fascinating is the well-poised head, the clear eye, the alabaster skin, the developed muscles, the graceful curves of neck and bust, the bloom of health upon the cheek! Verily the human body is a fit temple for the Holy Ghost. But this unique organism, at present so supple, will one day lie immobile in the final rigidity of death. The blood now circulating in the veins will be dried; the eye, which now sends forth magnetic flashes, will be dulled in a final heaviness. Yet a few days and the repulsive workmen of the tomb will commence their work of disintegration. The once-loved form will become revolting in the eyes of former admirers, and surviving

The Terror  
of Death.



friends will be thankful to place the decaying corpse within the merciful darkness of the sepulchre. Quick, then, with your perfumes and cosmetics and comely garments; death is coming, and with it the end of all your physical beauty.

Death also terminates our material riches. There is in most men a passion, more or less developed, for the accumulation of wealth. It may grow upon us until, with many, it becomes an obsession; the sole thought being to leave behind as much material wealth as possible. Most salutary is the thought for every man that death will compel him to relinquish whatever possessions he may have accumulated. One day the scheming brain will be quiet for ever, while the money so hardly earned will pass into other hands. Quick, then, to your books, to the exchange, to the office. Time is short, and when death comes all will be taken from you.

Death also terminates our earthly honours. It is a legitimate thing to strive after the true prizes of life: the honours of the university, the good will of our fellows, the rewards which fall to honest and arduous service. But when death comes these honours will be

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to us as faded leaves. The posthumous praise which men may offer to our memory will possess no value for us ; we shall be beyond human praise or blame. Slave and master will be together in the common resting-place of the tomb. Here a laurel-crowned hero, yonder a pauper—they both repose in the common silence. Then, quick ! run your race, strive for the prize ; death is coming to level us all in the final prostration.

Death rings down the curtain upon material beauty and riches and honours. This is all very commonplace, but I have  
Death our  
Friend. purposely been commonplace in order to give emphasis to what follows. It is the contemplation of these things that I have named which causes so many people to regard death with horror. They view it as a monster, a robber, a curse descending upon them. But to regard death thus is entirely unnatural. We ought not to look upon death with horror. It is not in itself our enemy, but our best friend. The main reason why people regard death with feelings of gloom and terror is that they view life falsely and they live falsely. The majority of people are

practical materialists (not necessarily professional materialists), and death possesses an aspect of terror and horror for them because it attacks them on the material side of their being. It removes them from that which they have materially accumulated; therefore they regard it with aversion. We must change our view and our mode of life if we are to confront death fairly and bravely. To live well is to solve in advance the mystery of death. He who has learned truly to live will not misunderstand the mission of death. Having laid the foundation of our study in the reiteration of these commonplaces, I now come to the heart of my theme.

What is the real meaning of death? Let us place the question under three lights—the light biological, the light social, and the light religious. What does death mean, scientifically con-  
Death  
considered  
Biologically.  
sidered? Biologically, death holds little mystery. To the biologist death is a necessity of Nature. It is part of God's plan for us; and to die is as natural as to breathe, to eat, to think, or to speak. Considered biologically, death is an inevitable natural process. It is involved in the act of living. It sounds

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paradoxical, but it is true, that because we live we must die ; death is part of the process of life. Life is the positive thing. Death is the negation of that positive thing. Life, considered biologically, is a process of waste and rebuilding—waste through work and movement, and rebuilding by means of food. The process begins at birth. A child's first need is food. This process of repair must keep pace with that of waste in order that growth may take place and life arrive at its full term. But this process of waste and repair has a natural limit attached to it. It cannot go on for ever.

From a simple rational point of view there seems to be no reason why we should not continue to live. All that is required is that the natural process persist without interruption. But hard facts often destroy the best logic. As a fact, there is a natural limit to the process, and the reason for this no one has yet discovered. It is a law of Nature, and we have to submit to it. Death occurs when the process of waste exceeds the process of rebuilding. Then "we slow down into the station," and die. Death is thus the end of one relation, of one process. But it is not,

therefore, the end of all relations. It is rather the end of one stage in life for the purpose of securing higher relations in another sphere. But this is to anticipate.

Death is the law of all living creatures; it has always been their law. Long before man appeared upon this planet death was in the world. Before sin came, animals were born and died. The story of the rocks is conclusive upon this point. It is no longer debatable.

The same law that is now in operation was at work in the world prior to man. Throughout the whole hierarchy of being, death has been the natural ending of life. Biologically, then, death holds no terrors. It is a purely normal and natural occurrence. There is nothing to be afraid of. It is an event, not a catastrophe.

Socially, also, death is an absolute necessity. It is a boon for the human race. If there were no death there could be no true human race. Humanity, as we know it, would not be possible.

Considered  
Socially.

Physical immortality is absolutely unthinkable. If people never died, very soon they would not be able to live. The world would not be habitable. Use your imagination.



## 12 DEATH AND THE HEREAFTER

Suppose that all the people who have ever been born on this planet were now alive, there would be so many of them that existence would be a frightful burden. According to the natural law of increase the numbers would be absolutely appalling. It is doubtful if we could live at all. One day, certainly, we should not be able to do so. It requires but little thought to comprehend that physical immortality is impossible. If there were no death, it would mean that there is no other life than this, and no hereafter.

Dr. Alger, in his "History of the Doctrine of the Future Life," has stated the case so well that I quote his words: "Consider," he says, "what would be the result if death were abolished and man endowed with an earthly immortality. At first they might rejoice and think their last dread enemy destroyed; but what a mistake! In the first place, since none are to be removed from the earth, of course none must come into it. The space and material are all wanted by those now in possession. All are soon mature men and women—not another infant to hang upon a mother's breast or be lifted in a father's arms. All the prattling music, fond cares,

yearning love, and gushing joys and hopes associated with the rearing of children, gone ! Ages roll on. They see the same everlasting faces, confront the same returning phenomena, engage in the same worn-out exercises, or lounge idly in the unchangeable conditions which bear no stimulant which they have not exhausted. Thousands of years pass. They have drunk every attainable spring of knowledge dry. Not a prize stirs a pulse. All pleasures, permeated till ingenuity is baffled, disgust them. No terror startles them. No possible experiment remains untried ; nor is there any unsounded fortune left. They have no future. One everlasting now is their all. At last the incessant repetition of identical phenomena, the unmitigated sameness of things, the eternal monotony of affairs, become unutterably burdensome and horrible. Full of loathing and immeasurable fatigue, a weariness like the weight of a universe oppresses them ; and what would they not give for a change ? Anything to break the nightmare spell of ennui—to die—to pass into some unguessed realm—to sleep for ever.”

Death, therefore, is an absolute necessity.

## 14 DEATH AND THE HEREAFTER

People speak of it as if it were something horrible and to be afraid of. But life should be regarded socially as a banquet, to which many guests are invited and where there are many sittings. The first take their place, and, having finished, make way for other relays, until all are served. If we were here for ever, the first-comers to the banquet would gain all; the last-comers, nothing.

What about the religious aspect of death? If death be perfectly natural, if it be biologically and socially a boon, how

Considered Religiously. is it that religion has often given an account of it very different from this? Death is said to be due to sin—to be a punishment for sin. Many believe that physical dissolution is God's chastisement for man's evildoing, and that even the passing of dear little children, who have never done any wrong, is a punishment for racial, if not personal, sin. This view of death is supposed to rest upon Bible authority. I grant that, superficially, the Bible appears to teach this: "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." "As by one man sin came into the world and death through sin." "The wages of sin is death." This seems conclusive.

It seems to teach that death is the result of sin and a punishment for sin. But it only seems so to teach. In reality the Bible teaches nothing of the kind. It never anywhere teaches that physical death is a punishment for sin, or that it is in any way due to sin. Let us turn to the root passage of all. "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. ii. 17). But according to Bible story, Adam reached a very ripe old age and then died.

Some, however, insist that the "day" was not a literal day, but a period. They give another meaning to the word "day"; yet perversely enough they retain the literal sense of the word "death." It is not just to play fast and loose with Scripture in this way. The whole verse is literal or none of it is literal. If the word "day" does not mean a day in the ordinary sense of the word, neither does the word "death" mean death in the ordinary sense of the word. As a matter of fact, it is plain that physical death is not intended, since "Adam" did not "die" on the day of his sin.

Further, Gen. iii. 19 represents physical death as normal: "Dust thou art, and unto

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dust shalt thou return." That is the announcement of a fact; not the pronouncement of a sentence. Man had been drawn from the materials of the earth, and would return to that from which he came. A careful study of the word "death" as it is employed in other parts of the Bible enables us to see that "death" is ethically rather than physically conceived, thus: "The law of the spirit of life in Jesus Christ made me free from the law of sin and of death" (Rom. viii. 2). "Hath freed me." The word is in the present tense, and yet every Christian of whom that is true must die physically. Now hear the words of our Lord: "He that heareth My word and believeth Him which sent Me hath everlasting life, and cometh not into judgment; he is passed out of death into life" (John v. 24). Again the tense is present. He is passed out of death into life. Yet every man of whom that is true and who believes in Christ dies physically. Again, "Whosoever liveth and believeth on Me shall never die" (John xi. 26). No word could be more broad and comprehensive.

Many of us live and believe in Jesus Christ,



yet we shall experience physical dissolution. Our fathers believed and lived in Jesus Christ, yet they died. Millions have found their life in Him, and yet, physically, they have died. How, then, shall we read this riddle? It is perfectly evident that the word "death" in the Bible is used in another than the physical sense. In the words we have just read, death does not mean physical dissolution; it has a moral content. Our Lord Himself illustrated His own word in the story of the Prodigal Son, who went into the far country and wasted his substance in riotous living. As a fact, the prodigal was very much alive physically. Yet, what does the father say of him? "This, my son, was dead and is alive again." Alive physically, he was dead morally.

St. Paul, speaking about the woman who is devoted to pleasure, says: "She that giveth herself to pleasure is dead while she liveth" (1 Tim. v. 6). Here again the word has a moral significance. Evidently, then, the word "death" in the Bible is used in quite another than the physical sense. What, then, is the "death" that is caused by sin? It is not physical dissolution. The men,

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to-day, who turn from God, the source of life, are "dead" morally.

Whenever a pupil of the school of Pythagoras deserted his master, a coffin was placed in the seat he had occupied, to signify that on the day he left the class he became intellectually "dead." The word is used in this moral sense again and again in the Bible. The wages of sin is death—the death of the soul.

But, if physical death is natural, how is it, then, that it appears so dreadful to the majority of people? Death is not dreadful to animals. Birds do not fear it. Fishes do not dread it. Death is natural to them, and it ought to be natural to us. But it is not easy for us. Why? Listen once more to St. Paul. "The sting of death is sin" (1 Cor. xv. 56). Here is the secret exposed. In this natural event called death there lies coiled a serpent which stings; that serpent is called sin. The presence of human sin gives a new moral significance to a perfectly natural event. If men were living normal lives, harmonious with God and their fellows, they would have no more fear of dying than they have of going to sleep at night.

Yet, as a matter of fact, there is a "sting" in dying, and that sting is the presence of sin, so that the natural event has become unnatural. Death thus becomes an enemy. St. Paul uses that very word: "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." It is our best friend, since it leads us to a higher life; but it has become our enemy through the presence of sin. How is that sting removed? The word of the Gospel is that it is removed by Jesus Christ. He came and took upon Himself the sin of the world.

As the plants absorb the carbon exhaled from our bodies, and give, in return, the oxygen which rejuvenates our life, so Jesus Christ took into Himself the sin of humanity; and He offers, in return, the fullness of His Divine life. He went to the depths for us; even unto death. The death that He bore was more than physical dissolution. He entered into that moral death by which the race has been cursed. He died twice: once in Gethsemane, where His soul was crucified ("My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death") and then on Calvary, when soul and body

The Sting  
Removed.

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were crucified. He experienced for us all the horror of human sin: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

The physical dissolution was the physical act complementary to the tasting of death in His soul. By that dying, in taking our sin, Christ has removed the sting of sin for all who are in living union with Him; they share His victory and experience the same triumph over death that Jesus Christ had. The sting of death is thus removed by our Lord Jesus Christ. The physical dissolution remains for us, but not the moral dread.

Consider, now, the immense difference that Christ has made to our conception of death.

Before Christ, the conception of death was gloomy to the last degree. The Hebrews held death to be the end of communion with God and the world. Their "Sheol" was a place of shadows; sometimes it is called the pit, sometimes the grave, sometimes the underworld. Their idea was that when a man passed from this world he went to "Sheol," where all brightness ceased. In the 49th and 73rd Psalms we have a glint of fuller

**The Hebrew  
Conception.**

light; but the general idea of death amongst the Hebrews was gloomy and dreary.

When we come into the atmosphere of the Gospels that gloom disappears. The new conception of death created by Christ is set forth in four <sup>The Christian Conception.</sup> figures. The first of these is that of sleep. "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth." "Them that sleep in Jesus." Sleep contains not a positive but a negative idea. It indicates the absence of terror and the presence of repose. It must not be pressed to mean unconsciousness. The old Christians called their cemeteries "Cubicula"—sleeping places. Modern Germans call their graveyards God's acre. The word "sleep" indicates the disappearance of all terror. The second New Testament word is the word "departure." St. Paul says, "The time of my departure is at hand." The word literally means to pull up anchor and set sail. That is what death is as revealed by Jesus Christ: here we are anchored to material things; in death the anchor is pulled up and we set sail for the golden port. A third word is the word "exodus." "They spake of His decease" (Luke ix. 31). The word literally

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is "exodus." It is a reminiscence of the exodus from Egypt. That exodus was the going out of bondage into liberty—out of Egypt into Canaan.

Death, as seen through Christ, is our "way out" from the partial to the perfect; from the gloom to the full day. The old gloom has gone. The last word indicates the exchange of a tent for a house. "If the earthly house of our tent be taken down, we have a building" (2 Cor. v. 1). Here, below, life is a pilgrimage; our abode is like a fragile tent. It is not meant to be permanent. Death is pulling up the tent pegs, packing up the tent, and removing into permanent residence.

Such is the difference made by Christ in our conception of death. It is not surprising that the two words "blessed" and "dead" are joined together in the Bible. "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord." No human philosophy or religion ever wedded these two words. When, a few years ago, a great Frenchman was buried in Père Lachaise, one of the executors of the deceased, standing at the graveside, said, "Gentlemen who have desired to render a final tribute to the

memory of M. de Sainte-Beuve, accept thanks in his name. Gentlemen, the ceremony is concluded." How bare, how bald, compared with the triumph at a Christian graveside! To die is to be blessed. But how and for whom? Blessed are they that die in the Lord. It is oneness with Him that gives triumph. "To die is gain"—it is progress. Such is death as revealed to us by the religion of Jesus Christ. But death, however you view it, is a solemn event for every one: it is the end of one plane of existence and the beginning of another.

Death makes no difference to any character. There is no magic in it. Thousands imagine that when they die all they have to do is to send for a priest to offer a prayer, and then die to wake up saints. Never was error more profound. No greater change takes place in you in the act of dying than in the act of removing from one house to another. We remain the same person. We continue on the other side as we depart from this side—for good or bad. *This* life determines *that*. The law of habit is rigorous, and applies in all worlds. The solemn thing is to live well. We shall then

Conclusion.

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die well. Let us order our life in view of the inevitable future. To use the words of Bourdaloue, "Lift from death the power to betray you." It is madness to occupy ourselves with bagatelles and to neglect our destiny. Youth abandoned to illusions! Maiden flattered by the foolish or the perverse! Man absorbed in affairs! Learn the art of living. Prepare yourselves. Life is a victory or a defeat here and hereafter. If we can say here, "To me to live is Christ," then when the dissolution comes we can say with supreme confidence, "to die is gain."



**DOES DEATH END ALL ?**

**THE ANSWER OF SCIENCE AND OF  
REASON**



## LECTURE II

### DOES DEATH END ALL?

#### (A) THE ANSWER OF SCIENCE AND OF REASON

ONE of the earliest as also one of the latest questions asked by man is that contained in the book of Job: "If a man die, shall he live again?" It is forced upon serious people at all times. When we reflect at all, and particularly at special times, as when some great man passes from us, or some dearly loved friend leaves us, we cannot avoid it. They who declare their indifference to it are less than human.

The fact of death is apparent to every one. But is death the end of everything? Do we, after an ephemeral existence, return to dust, or do we enter through the portal of death into a fuller life?

*The Compelling question.*

Is death a collapse or a change? Is it the complete ruin of the house in which the

tenant is also involved, or is it merely a removal on the part of the tenant from one house to another? The question is vital, and not speculative. All morality is involved in it. It is idle for people to bid us "do our duty and let speculation alone," since the whole question of duty is involved in the larger question of life and its continuity. Here are two men, one of whom believes that personal human life begins and ends in time; while the other believes that the present life is only one phase of existence, to be followed by other phases. To these two men the conception of "duty" must be entirely different. The nature of things compels this. Belief or non-belief in the continuity of personal life goes to the quick of practical ethics. The question presses to-day perhaps more than ever before, since there is at work in modern society a sinister influence which tends to asphyxiate the soul.

It is proclaimed, with a show of learning, that there is no evidence for the life beyond.

No one has come back to tell us of  
**A Sinister Influence.** "that undiscovered bourne from which no traveller returns." "The whisper of death is heard throughout the

universe, and everything tends to dissolution.” “The moon stands as a perpetual warning that its fate will one day be our fate and the fate of the entire universe.” Sometimes this denial of immortality is gilded, as by Dr. Haeckel, who, after dismissing the idea of survival as a silly superstition, declares that man, “convinced that there is no eternal life awaiting him, will strive all the more to brighten his life on earth, and rationally improve his condition in harmony with that of his fellows.” Will he? Beneath this seeming gold there is pewter, which is soon revealed. Will man, assured that he has no future, strive to perfect his condition here below? Let our common sense answer.

For example, if a student is convinced that, after years of study at the university, there is absolutely no career for him, will he be likely to study with greater earnestness and zest? To tell him that his studies end with themselves, and that there is no career for him, is to cut the very nerve of the man’s endeavour—to cause him to be idle and to drift. He might well say, “It is not worth while to study, since there is nothing at the end of it.”

The destruction of belief in immortality is the destruction, also, of all great ideals. It encourages selfishness, and cheapens human life. In proof of this I offer this fact: The same Professor Haeckel, who has so learnedly sought to persuade his admirers that there is no such thing as immortality, frankly advocates suicide for the poor, the infirm, and the unfortunate. It is significant that they who make it their business to destroy human belief in immortality have nothing further to suggest than suicide for those who find the battle of life go hardly with them.

Against this corrosive error I shall place the Christian truth concerning destiny, and in such a way as to appeal completely to your reason.

The Christian truth, then, in outline concerning destiny is this: We have come from God; we return to Him; the present life is simply a passage; here we prepare for a larger life; death being the entrance upon that larger life, the character of which is determined by the manner in which we conduct ourselves here below. Nothing whatever can be reasonably urged against this; while everything can be urged on its

behalf. I propose to place this Christian truth under a fivefold light: the light of science, the light of pure reason, the light of history, the light of experience, and, finally, the light of Christ. I ask you to attend carefully to my method. I do not begin with the Bible nor with the witness of our Lord, lest I expose myself to the charge of being a partisan or of begging the question in advance.

First of all, then, we shall examine the question in the light of modern science. It is assumed by certain persons that modern science has pronounced The Light  
of Science. against the idea of immortality.

Never was there a more profound error. It is true that a few scientists have lifted up their voices against it, but these are men of a peculiarly dogmatic temperament—aggressive men who seek to force the whole of their opinions upon the public. Their science does not compel them to deny immortality. The greatest name in the scientific world to-day, on the materialistic side, is that of an old man close upon eighty years of age, who has accomplished great work in his particular line, and who is, therefore, an expert in his own subject. It does not follow, however,

that he is an expert in history and in philosophy and other things of which he treats. Indeed he is frank enough to say as much. The name of Ernst Haeckel is the only name in the world of science to-day, on the materialistic side, that really counts. But if it is a question of names, then against that one great name on the material side we can count scores on the spiritual side. Lord Kelvin, Professors Wundt, Virchow, Du Bois Reymond, Lord Lister, Sir William Ramsay, Sir William Crookes, Sir Oliver Lodge, Professor Stewart, Professor Macalister, Sir Victor Horsley, Sir A. R. Wallace, Sir Dyce Duckworth, Professor J. Arthur Thomson, and many others are names that rank as high as that of Dr. Haeckel, and these scientists hold a spiritual or at least an anti-material conception of the universe.

So is it also with the philosophers. Thirty years ago, in England, the materialistic philosophy of Herbert Spencer dominated the world of thought. Yet, even at that time, it was predicted that Herbert Spencer would outlive his philosophy, and that ten years after his death his philosophy would be forgotten. The prediction has been fulfilled.



One of the acutest rationalists of our time was candid enough to say, in a panegyric pronounced upon Mr. Spencer at the time of his death, that the philosophy for which the deceased master stood had been buried with his body. A new philosophy has arisen which has made the old no longer possible.

The two great names in the world of philosophy to-day are those of Eucken in Germany and Bergson in France, and they stand for a spiritual conception of things. Professor Bergson, in particular, has, in his brilliant studies, shown that the old materialism is simply impossible. He has given us a new key to knowledge. He may not have yet reached a final goal, and certainly he may not be quoted as an advocate of orthodoxy, but, by general admission, he is a path-finder directing us to a truer conception of the universe. The assumption made by ignorant or interested people that "science" and philosophy are against immortality is simply false. The great names in the world of thought to-day are associated with spiritual, and not material, conceptions of life. Formerly it was said that chemistry could entirely account for man. Man was declared to be a

compound of oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen, sodium, iron, lime, and phosphorus. Formerly it was said that thought was a function of the brain, and that when the brain perished mind perished with it. Everything was materially conceived. Genius was a question of the quantity, the quality, or the position of matter.

But these opinions were not based upon science—that is, upon ascertained knowledge—but upon delusive appearances. To-day that puerile conception of things has entirely passed for educated people. Modern science demonstrates two things, from which we have the right to deduce a third. First, it shows that life is the cause of organization, while it differs from it. Secondly, it shows that life transcends organization. And I submit that, given these two things, we are entitled to deduce a third thing—namely, that life, which precedes and transcends organization, can and must survive organization.

Let us think of the first of these things. Life creates organization, while it differs from it. Man's life is revealed to us here below as physically organized. The organization begins in the very simplest manner. Examined under

Life and  
Organization.

the microscope "the naked bioplast is the merest speck, resembling jelly, very much alive, and wholly without organization." This is slowly built up until it attains the dimensions we find in the most highly organized man or woman. The physical organization starts in the humblest way and reaches the most amazing goal. "The body is composed, organically, of particles extracted from food and air, and woven together by the process of digestion and assimilation." The most wonderful and delicate part of the organization is the brain.

Now modern science tells us that the whole of this physical organization—brain included—is in a state of continual flux—it is always changing. Our bodies are continually wearing out, and are as continually being repaired. Organically, we are none of us the same people that we were a year ago; the old particles have all been replaced by new ones.

Concerning this physical organization, which starts so simply and attains such marvellous proportions, we can say two things. First, that it creates nothing, but, on the contrary, itself is created. Behind it

is the "mysterious weaver," to use the late Professor Huxley's word, that we call "life," that great mystery which ever eludes us, and which ever remains invisible. Life is the real thing. The fact of its mystery does not detract from its reality. Reality is not, as M. Bergson tells us, a mental concept; it is the substantial thing called life. No man has ever seen it; we only behold its manifestations. It is the mysterious workman responsible for all organic work. The microscope does not lie. And, to quote Mr. Huxley again, "The naked bioplast is a speck of glue-like matter without colour and without organization, but very much alive."

Behind and beneath organization, then, lies that elusive force which we name life. What is the relation of this organization to that which causes it—that is, to the life which lies behind it? An organ is simply an instrument—but of what? Behind the organ, behind the instrument, there is the living performer who remains the same. The instrument changes; not so the performer. The particles of our bodies are ever in movement; but the real self lies deeper than the body as manifested at any one time. "The last

body we carry no more represents the essential self than did our first body."

The body we have to-day is wholly different, so far as its particles are concerned, from that we had ten years ago; but the underlying life—the real self—remains unchanged in essence. Men name that self differently. Some call it "soul," some "spirit," some "self," some "personality." It matters little what you call it. We must say, with Sir Oliver Lodge, "We do not know what it is, but it is ridiculous to say it is nothing." Call it soul, or spirit, or self, or personality, but do not be so foolish as to say that that which builds up and renews organization is nothing at all. Your real self—your ego—remains the same throughout the many changes which pass over the organization.

We still say "I," although the brain of to-day is not the brain of five years ago. We can trace our personal self right back to the time when we commenced to think at all. We know that "we" remain the same, although everything physical in our make-up has been in a state of continual flux. Further, that "self or soul" remains

intact when one half of the brain has been removed. Sometimes it happens in surgery that, owing to disease, a portion of the brain has to be removed. But the removal of half the brain does not remove half the personality. The personality remains intact even when the organs through which it expresses itself are not normal or are dulled. Who has not been thrilled with the wonderful compositions of Beethoven, which have in them the music of the storm, the fall of the cataract, the laughter of children, and every note of which Nature is full? Yet the great musician was stone deaf, and heard none of the sounds which he gave to the world. Beethoven was partly sealed to the outer world on account of a defective physical organization, yet he heard within himself those marvellous harmonies with which he ravished the world. The most striking instance, however, in modern times—perhaps

in the history of the world—is the  
Helen Keller. case of Helen Keller, the American

girl. When a little child (before she was eighteen months old, I believe) little Helen Keller became blind and deaf and dumb. Her physical organization was sealed up on

three sides. For years the child lived in an enclosed world—a veritable prison. She never heard a sound from the material world that her little brain could resolve into figures and images and ideas. She was sealed to the physical universe. Yet what happened?

Deep down in her soul she had fought her own personal battles, and when Dr. Phillips Brooks tried, through Miss Sullivan (her teacher), to speak to her about God, Helen Keller's face broke into a smile and she said in her lip language, "You call Him Father; I have known Him for a long time, but I didn't know what to call Him." Her instincts had been at work despite the handicap of her senses. The amazing thing is that this blind, deaf and dumb woman can "speak" several languages; she can play magnificently on the piano; she writes books and composes poetry; she is no mean philosopher, and yet organically she is handicapped more heavily than perhaps any other woman. Despite the organic defects, her personality is intact. You have only to read Helen Keller's books to understand that the woman possesses a fine soul.

Further, it is a fact that the real self, the spirit, personality, or soul, often grows richer and riper and more beautiful as the physical organism through which it acts falls into decay. Old men and women whose physical powers are failing, not only maintain, they also continue to develop, beauty of character. They grow within to the very end. Their outward man decays, but their inward man is renewed day by day.

Here, then, are indisputable facts concerning human life and its organization. These facts justify us in saying: First, that as life creates this physical organization, it is equal to the task of creating a further organization when occasion demands it. Life has produced an organism answering to the material conditions of existence. Who, in the name of science, will dare to say that it cannot produce an organism of another order to suit a different set of conditions?

Secondly, if our real "self" has already survived numberless physical changes, it can surely survive a final one. Thirdly, when the organ wears out, it does not involve the death of the performer. When an organ



breaks down I am not entitled to say that the performer dies with it, any more than I am entitled to say that Melbourne and London have ceased to exist as cities because the cable by which we communicate with each other has suddenly been cut. And when a body "dies" we are not to assume that the personal life which has manifested itself through a certain organization has ceased to be.

The second thing science shows us is that life transcends organization. Once it was said that the "soul," or "spirit," was the production of matter—<sup>Life</sup> transcendent. "the brain secretes thought as the liver secretes the bile"! But if we ourselves are the product of matter, then it follows that we are limited by that which has produced us. Nothing can rise higher than its source, and if we are the product of matter then we cannot rise higher than the limits of matter. But every day of our life we do rise superior to matter. The "soul" can create. Out of sound we can create harmony. From spectacles we can create Art. We meditate upon certain facts, and from these we can deduce principles.

Chief of all, we can rise to the notion of the Ideal. All the highest things to which we can, in thought, rise are not capable of being measured in any material way. Who can weigh honour, or love, or virtue? These things are spiritual conceptions, and pass beyond all material boundaries. We can rise to the conception of the highest of all and conceive of God. All this means that the essential self is spiritual. Were we the product of matter we could never exercise these spiritual functions which characterize us when we are normal.

It must be frankly admitted that these facts do not demonstrate the existence of life beyond, but they prepare the way for belief in it by breaking down the old barrier that stood in the way—the barrier of materialism—and compelling people to admit the essential spirituality of the real human “self.” This soul or self, I grant, is not demonstrable to the senses; but this is no argument against its reality. There is in the universe an element without which we could never hear human voice nor sound of any kind; without which there would be no light, nor, indeed, terrestrial

Summary.

life. It is known as the "ether of space." Yet it is not directly demonstrable to our senses. With difficulty many people have persuaded themselves that it exists at all. Yet, says Lord Kelvin, there is nothing more certain than the existence of the ether of space. It explains the phenomena of light, of colour, of sound, and it *alone* explains these things. So is it with the soul: no man has ever seen it; yet it alone explains the phenomena of our life. Suppress the spiritual explanation of existence and life becomes an insolvable enigma before which humanity must break its heart. Modern science, then, by its spiritual trend, makes belief in the survival of the personal self at least believable.

We have now to place our main question: Does death end all? under a second light—that of pure reason. There are The Light of Reason. two human laws which I submit to you demand the existence of the life beyond—namely, the law of progress and the law of justice. Listen while I unfold their principles to you. First of all, the law of progress: The story of the human race is one of progress. During many ages,

so vast in duration that the brain reels in trying to grasp the reality, this earth of ours was slowly fashioned for the habitation of man. Fire and water fought titanic battles; there were violent upheavals and terrible eruptions. Then came the time of calm and reconstruction. Strange flora and stranger beasts appeared. Slowly the wilderness of the world became a habitable garden, and then, at the time appointed, man appeared. In his far-off beginnings he was lowly, but under the touch of his Creator he became man as we know him. Man, racially, has progressed from savagery to civilization; from brutality to mentality. The progress of the race is repeated in each individual. Each individual begins with infancy, and passes through various stages until maturity is reached. Of all animals man is the slowest in reaching perfection. Man is the only creature that has a prolonged infancy and childhood. Every other creature save man is born clothed. He is also born defenceless and dependent. Compare a baby six months old with a tiger or a shark or an eagle six months old. The physical advantage is all on the side of the tiger or the shark or the

eagle. The physical reason for this unique slow growth of man has never yet been discovered, and most probably never will be.

There is no inherent physical reason why the beast should be better off than the babe.

Is the reason, then, mental? But

beasts reason as well as men. We <sup>Man's slow Development.</sup> possess no monopoly of reason.

Ants, for example, have a great degree of reasoning power, while amongst the higher animals reason has been developed to an amazing degree—almost to the point of logic, it would seem, in some cases. It cannot be, then, on account of reason, since we share that with animals. Our reason, however, is superior to theirs. Is man's slow development, then, on account of the higher reason? But why, if our ultimate destiny is the same as that of the animals? In this case all the advantage is on the side of the animals. If man is only a material being as are they, he is worse off than they. The real reason for man's slow development is neither physical nor mental—it is moral. It is because there is a worthy goal for our life that we are conducted along this particular route. Look into yourselves, and you will

find that "progress" is written deeply upon your heart. We possess the sense of incompleteness. We are always seeking the good "just beyond." When we are normal we are not at rest. The lower down in the scale that we are, the easier it is to be content as are the animals; the higher we rise, the more are we tormented with desire. It is always the "beyond" to which we aspire. In this, true men differ from the animals which are not ever seeking the beyond. Contentment is one of the great marks of the animal world. But give a man wealth and he wants more. Give him happiness and he wants more. He is not happy in the possession of material things—money, pleasure, honours, knowledge. There is still a disquiet, and he cries out for his chief good. It is GOD he really wants. Progress is essential to his nature.

Now, it is a fact that the essential needs of all other creatures are supplied by Nature.

In the South and West of England,  
The Law of Progress. in autumn, the swallows gather together from every quarter.

There is one night when the air is thick with birds, chirping as if in conference, or

flying round and round in great circles. On the following morning there is not a swallow left. During the night the winged host has crossed the sea to spend the winter in Africa, the South of Europe, and other warm countries. Probably one half of the swallows had never been that way before. They were hatched out in the early summer. But a mysterious instinct called them away. They had never seen winter, but a secret instinct warned them that cold and frost and snow were coming, while a secret voice called them to the warm land. Never yet did Nature betray even a swallow. The essential needs, the instincts of animals and birds, are all met. Are we less endowed than they? Are we worse off than they? Shall they be satisfied and we be mocked? Are our instincts after the fuller life and the chief good to be derided?

You do not doubt that man upon this planet is God's masterpiece. Will He wilfully destroy His masterpiece? Has the world been slowly prepared through long ages for man? Has the human race been slowly guided to its present high estate? Has each individual been schooled through a long process simply

that he may obtain a fleeting glimpse of his chief good and then vanish into nothingness? If so, then I declare that the building is not equal to the foundation. Here is a builder who says: "I am about to erect a marvellous building, but first of all I must prepare the foundation." Thousands of workmen are employed by him. It takes seventy years to complete the foundation. One day the wonderful building erected upon this colossal foundation is finished, and the builder exhibits a little wooden bungalow in which a man may live for one brief summer. Could madness go further?

Yet this is not an inapt image of what the Divine Builder would be guilty of, were he, after all the preparation that he has made for the advent of man, to limit man's life to one brief period of time. Can we really believe that, after this slow preparation of the world for man and for the world, he has been brought into existence for a few paltry years to dream of his chief good and then to pass into oblivion? The fact is that perfect development is not possible in this life. There must be a further life to enable us to reach our goal.



There is another matter, also, for consideration. Man is the only creature that is permanently bound to his kith and kin. The ties which bind animals to each other are slender and are easily severed. Parents and offspring part never to know each other as such again. It is otherwise with man. We cannot forget the loved ones to whom we were bound by spiritual affinities, and who have gone from us, and we desire reunion with them. Are these bonds to be ruthlessly torn asunder? If there is no life beyond, the present life is wasteful and untruthful. If there is no immortality, then there is no God, or we are the sport of a spiteful Providence. So much does reason say in regard to the law of progress.

But there is another human law which demands the life beyond. It is the law of justice. There is an eternal order in this universe: a law of The Law of Justice. equilibrium. Every thunderstorm proclaims it; every trembling of the earth advertizes it in symbol. Nature never fails to restore equilibrium where disorder and displacement occur. The law of equilibrium is the law of the universe. The eternal

justice finds an echo in every man's soul. It registers itself in conscience. The blush of shame which mounts to our cheek after the commission of an evil act; the disquiet of our conscience; the fear of discovery—these are advertisements within us that there exists an eternal law of justice. Murderers, like Mathias in "The Bells," hear the sound of the sleigh-bells when the rest of men hear nothing. No amount of philosophical reasoning can silence the awful bells which jingle in the conscience of a bad man.

There is an eternal justice, and there needs to be. Life here below is full of inequalities and disproportions. "From age to age a Tiberius wears the purple, while the pride and flower of humanity is crucified between two thieves." In our world are seducers of innocence and virtue, and robbers of widows and orphans. Villains abound—men who corrupt the public life! Many of them escape their retribution here below. Society receives the wealthy seducer and allows the poor victim to go to the devil. Money can triumph over human justice. These disproportions must be set right. The law of equilibrium must operate morally and completely as it

now acts materially. If death ends all, what a godsend to the villain ! What a desolation to the oppressed ! If death ends all, God receives a triple wound. His wisdom is wounded ; He has no proportion between means and ends. His goodness is wounded ; He has no answer to the soul's cry. His justice is wounded ; He allows evil to finally triumph. Humanity also receives a triple wound. Our Nature is mutilated ; our desires are mocked ; our progress is arrested. Death cannot be the end. Placed under the light of science and under the light of reason, there is but one answer to the question : "Does death end all?" It is an emphatic NO !



**DOES DEATH END ALL?**

**THE ANSWER OF HISTORY,  
EXPERIENCE, AND REVELATION**



## LECTURE III

### DOES DEATH END ALL?

#### (B) THE ANSWER OF HISTORY, EXPERIENCE, AND REVELATION

HAVING heard the testimony of science and reason on behalf of the truth of human survival after death, we shall now listen to the remainder of the witnesses—namely, the witness of History, the witness of Experience, and the witness of Jesus Christ.

First of all, I invoke the living witness of History. Observe, I call it a *living* witness. History is the record of human life. It shows man in action from the beginning. That view is entirely inadequate which represents history as consisting simply of a collection of ancient stories more or less related to each other. The scientific historian, collating the materials which are available for his

The Witness  
of History.

purpose, presents what may be called a collective human biography as distinct from an individual biography. True history shows us man as man. It shows us man essential: in action, thought, and belief, as distinct from man accidental; man corporate, as distinct from man individual. To-day the story of the human race is being re-read in the light of Psychology in order that the inner life of man may be known. It is in the name of Psychology that I now invoke history to inform us what man, as man, has believed concerning the life beyond. During late years science has rendered to mankind a signal service in conducting us to the very beginnings of human history. It has taken us back long before the time of the Bible, long before the commencement of Israel, long before the time of writing. It has placed us close to that dim border-land where substantial fact touches legend.

We are enabled to reconstruct the life lived in Egypt, Babylon, Assyria, Phœnicia, and at the cradle of the race.

The Ancient  
East.

Scientific history to-day reveals to us, as having existed in those far-off times, every possible variety of



religious belief and practice, and almost every possible variety of social life, from the most repulsive and degrading to the most refined and civilized. And amidst all that astonishing variety we clearly perceive one strange and consistent thing—namely, that in all epochs, amongst all peoples, in every territory, and throughout the whole hierarchy of the human family, there was, and is, a distinct and definite belief in the survival of man beyond the tomb. Three things attest this universal belief: first, the monuments that men have erected. For ages men regarded the Pyramids of Egypt with astonishment. They regarded them very properly as being amongst the marvels of the world. They stood as monuments of human skill and labour. But they and the Sphinx—their neighbour—were always enveloped in mystery. Why were they built? To what purpose these strange and enduring constructions? Human ingenuity exhausted itself in seeking to penetrate the mystery of the Pyramids. To-day we know why the Pyramids were built and what they meant. Science and religion helped to construct them. Why were these great Pyramids, which are

now known to be tombs of the kings, erected? Why were the bodies embalmed? Not only to guard human dust and to preserve a human memory, but to witness to their belief in the future. The Egyptians believed that the souls of the departed were in some way still connected with the bodies they had left behind, and that they periodically returned to them. Hence these huge mounds of the Pyramids proclaimed to the whole world the Egyptian belief in the survival of the soul. They filled many of their tombs with all kinds of furniture, and linen, and material for games, so that the "dead" might return to pleasant surroundings. Food, also, was placed in the sepulchres for the use of the dead when they returned. The Pyramids, however, represented only one form of monument. There were many other monuments erected throughout the world, chief amongst which were house tombs. In Africa, in the North of America—in the Old and New Worlds alike—these monuments are found. "House tombs" have been discovered everywhere. These were built in the form of houses with chambers, because it was believed that the dead still lived and revisited their tombs,

which were thus made pleasant for their return. I cannot dwell upon this theme further. The evidence upon this line is simply overwhelming. These monuments are universal, and they attest human belief in the survival of man beyond the tomb.

Next to the monuments we must consider the religious rites which men have performed. Sacrifices and incantations were offered at the tombs. Why? Why <sup>Rites and Incantations.</sup> did men seek to talk with the dead? Why did they recite these incantations and prayers? It was to witness to their belief in the survival of those who had passed away. In certain parts of Africa, even until yesterday, when a great chief died, all his wives and slaves were put to death at the same time. Formerly it was believed that this holocaust was nothing more nor less than murder in cold blood. Now we know the real reason was that these tribes believed their chief to be still living, and that he would need his wives and slaves, who were therefore killed and sent after him to the life beyond. That shocking act was their testimony to belief in a future life. An Indian mother, when her child died, repaired each morning

to its grave and placed a saucer of milk thereon, imagining that the child would need refreshment. When an Indian warrior was buried his relatives buried with him his bow and arrow, believing that he would have use for them in the chase to which he had gone in the life beyond. Evidence of this kind, again, is simply overwhelming. It is found everywhere. The monuments that have been built and the rites that have been practised everywhere attest the universality of belief in a life beyond the tomb.

After the monuments and the rites which men everywhere have established, we must consider the doctrines which men have professed concerning the future. Since the Egyptian "Book of the Dead" was discovered, we know certainly what the Egyptians believed concerning the life beyond. At death all souls were weighed in the scales of justice, the good going to the god of light, the bad going to the god of darkness. None were exterminated; all passed onward to a future life. Hindus and Chaldeans believed in the reincarnation; others in the transmigration of souls. It is impossible here to offer a hundredth part

of the evidence upon this line. During the last fifteen years the evidence has multiplied at such a rate as to become oppressive by its very vastness. We are entitled to say that, in some form or other, belief in the hereafter was quite universal. This belief took every form. Often it was confused, very often grotesque; it was full of illusions; yet, if we penetrate to the bottom of it all—below the monuments, below the rites and doctrines—we shall find a radical belief, clearly or confusedly expressed, in the reality of a life beyond. To put it in the simplest form, men everywhere believed that death did not end all.

Superior people dismiss all this evidence with a superb wave of the hand and with the contemptuous word "Paganism"! And this passes for reason! On the contrary, it is the height of *unreason* to dismiss such facts in this easy way. I submit to you that evidence of this kind, which our foremost scholars are continually gathering, is worthy of better treatment than dismissal with a shrug of the shoulder and the contemptuous utterance of the word "Pagan." All these facts have to be explained. Whence

came this radical belief which resulted in the erection of the Pyramids and house tombs; the creation of these rites; the birth of these doctrines? Everywhere men saw themselves limited by matter; yet in spite of what they saw, they believed in the illimitable. They saw the bodies of their fellows laid in the tomb, yet they believed that, somehow, they were not there. All around them they beheld the spectacle of death, yet in spite of what they saw they believed in survival.

It is a marvellous thing, this universal war against the evidence of the senses, this refusal to believe in the finality of death. One of two things: either these beliefs and practices represented a natural instinct of human life, or they represented a colossal and universal error. How can we explain it? Shall we say with some that these beliefs originated in man's belief in ghosts? But that explains nothing. It simply pushes back the mystery a degree further. Why should men believe in ghosts? Again, it has been sought to trace these beliefs to the practice of ancestor worship. This, again, explains nothing at all. Why should men

worship their ancestors if they are dead and done with? Equally foolish is it to pretend that dreams can explain this universal belief. We must abandon all these puerile explanations. One thing, and one thing only, explains the mystery; one key alone entirely fits the facts. This belief in survival, however its forms and statements may vary, represents an ineradicable instinct of the soul. Two thousand five hundred years ago, in Athens, the greatest teacher of his day—one of the white souls of the world—was awaiting the hour of sunset. At the moment when the sun touched the horizon he was condemned to drain the cup of hemlock and then lie down to die. His disciples gathered round him for a final conversation. They asked him where he wished to be buried. And the master made answer in words that have become immortal: "Bury me if you can catch me." When Socrates spoke thus to his troubled disciples he spake not only for himself but for humanity. He voiced the universal instinct that is found in every breast. The witness of history is emphatic. Mankind has never believed that death ends all.

It is quite beside the point to say that many—very many—individuals have not shared this universal belief. The singularities of individuals never weigh against the universal instincts of the race, and it is with the beliefs of the race that we are here concerned.

We now invoke another witness, that of experience; a witness of an entirely different order; still, a living witness, and  
The Witness of Experience. one that may be cross-examined in contemporary life. History not only discloses the fact that men have always believed in the existence of a life beyond the present, it also shows that from the earliest times men have testified to personal experiences and communications with the world beyond. Let us, first of all, appeal to the Bible. The Bible is the most practical book in the world. It touches human life on its social and practical side; it teaches man how to live here below. It teaches the most perfect secularism, using that word in its true sense. It is a book for this world. If its precepts were followed our world would become a paradise. Let us understand this for, unhappily, vast numbers of our con-



temporaries are under an entire misconception upon this point. They imagine that the Bible speaks only about the life to come. Nothing is more mistaken than this idea. But the Bible is also a book of the other world—of the spirit world—as well as of this. From its earliest to its latest pages it speaks about angels and visitors from the “beyond”; that world which lies around us—the spirit world. To Abraham mysterious visitors came. They are called angels. To Moses an angel appears in a flame of fire in the midst of a bush; the bush being burned with fire and yet not consumed. Gideon beholds a celestial visitor who appears and vanishes in a flame. Joshua the soldier challenges one who appears to be a man holding a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua asks him, “Art thou for us or for our adversaries?” and he hears the strange reply: “As captain of the host of the Lord am I come.” The child Samuel is awakened at the dead of night by a mysterious voice, which even the old priest Eli cannot understand. At length Eli understands that a voice from the “other side” has spoken to the boy.

Passing on to the New Testament, we find upon its first page the story of an angel appearing to Mary, announcing that she shall bring forth a Son whose name shall be called Jesus. In due time the child is born at Bethlehem, and immediately a band of angels breaks the silence of midnight with a celestial chorus. The life of Jesus is a life of communion with that strange spirit world which lies so close to us. Once, in the open air, a voice speaks to Him; the crowd mistakes it for thunder. Upon the Mount of Transfiguration the spirit world again discloses itself. In Gethsemane an angel appears and strengthens Him. Upon the morning of His resurrection two angels appear in white. Angels are present at His sepulchre and at His ascension. Later, we read of Peter being awakened from sleep in the middle of the night, and of his deliverance at the hands of an angel. Still later we read of the great St. Paul, who in the middle of the stress and strain of the storm was visited by an angel of the Lord, who encouraged and directed him. I am not now discussing these cases, I merely collect them from the sacred page.

The Bible, then, is a book of the other world as well as of this.

If we pass from the Bible to the Christian Church a similar story appears. In the lives of the "Saints" and in numberless biographies of Christian men and Psychic  
Phenomena. women strange stories of happenings, which (for want of a better word) we call "Supernatural," are recorded. There is scarcely need to refer to these in detail, they are so well known.

A smile of incredulity passes over the faces of many when they read narratives of this kind. They are old wives' tales, too ridiculous to be true: manifest legends, so it is asserted. But modern investigation is compelling us to reconsider these old stories, and to ask whether, after all, we are not mistaken in so cheaply dismissing them. If similar things occur to-day it may be premised that they occurred in the past. Let us, then, listen to the testimony of some of our moderns. Here we tread upon most interesting yet dangerous and delicate ground. Thirty years ago, on the 20th of February, 1882, the Society for Psychical Research was formed in London. It had,

and still has, a most distinguished membership, containing some of the most eminent men in the realms of science, religion, and literature. The main object of the Society is to inquire into the truth or otherwise of alleged psychic phenomena.

For thirty years the Society has been at work—with what results? Three may be named. First, it has exposed a vast amount of trickery wrought by professional “mediums” and others. It was the Society for Psychical Research which exposed the alleged miracles of the “Mahatmas,” showing them to be due to barefaced trickery and roguery. In exposing this mummery the Society has rendered signal public service. Secondly, it has exploded a great many superstitions, and shown the hollowness of more than one belief. But beyond this it has established beyond all doubt the reality of a great deal of psychical phenomena. The story of its work is told in the papers issued by the Society. But all that the general public needs to know concerning the general subject, as investigated by the Society and others, is summed up in Mr. F. W. H. Myers’s monumental work, “Human Personality and Survival”; in

Camille Flammarion's "The Unknown"; and in a recent little book by the secretary of the Society for Psychical Research—namely, "Psychical Research," by Professor Barrett.

These three books for general purposes are sufficient. And they give us the following findings: First, the reality of many hundreds of what we call "apparitions" of both the living, the dying, and those whom we call the "dead." Professor Barrett, in his little book, says: "Unless we reject all testimony or attribute the numerous cases investigated to some illusion, there can be no doubt that a distant person can, by his directed thought or by dream, create a phantom of himself in the mind of the distant percipient. This suggests a general explanation of those visual hallucinations, or apparitions, at the moment of death, which are supported by abundant first-hand evidence."

To quote but one instance only, one out of very many. It is given by Camille Flammarion in "The Unknown":—

"M. André Bloch, a young musician of great talent, who took the Prix de Rome, and is a member of the Astronomical Society of

France, sent me recently this fact that came under his observation in 1896 :

“ ‘MY DEAR MASTER,—It was in June, 1896, my mother came to Rome to join me during the last two years of my residence in Italy, and she lived near the Académie de France, in a family pension in the Via Gregoriana, where you yourself once lived. As at this time I still had some work to finish before I could go back to France, my mother, in order not to interrupt me, went about the city by herself, and only came to join me about midday at the Villa Medici, where we breakfasted together. Well, one day I saw her coming, in a state of great excitement, at eight o'clock in the morning. When I asked her what had happened she told me that when she was dressing she had suddenly seen beside her her nephew René Kraemer, who looked at her, and said, as if laughing at her surprise, ‘Yes, indeed, I am quite dead.’ Very much frightened, she made haste to come to me. I quieted her as much as possible, and then turned our conversation to other subjects.

“ ‘Two weeks later we both got back to

Paris, after having travelled through a portion of Italy, and then we heard of the death of my cousin René, which had taken place on June 12, 1896, in the apartment his parents occupied, 31 Rue de Moscou. He was fourteen years old. Thanks to some work I was finishing in Rome at the time of my mother's visit, I can verify the date, and even the hour, when this phenomenon took place. On that day my little cousin, who had been ill with peritonitis for some days, was dying at six in the morning, and died at midday, after having several times expressed his desire to see his Aunt Berthe, my mother.

“‘It should be observed that in none of the numerous letters received from Paris had any word been said about my cousin's illness. My mother's great affection for the boy was well known, and she would have gone back to Paris had she heard that the least thing was the matter with him. They did not even telegraph to us the news of his death. I may add that when it is six o'clock in the morning at Paris, clocks in Rome, by reason of the difference of longitude, say seven, and it was precisely at

that hour that my mother had seen the vision.’”

There are thousands of well-authenticated cases of that kind.

The Society for Psychical Research has established the reality of hundreds of cases of apparitions of the “dead” and dying belonging to that order. It has also established the objective reality of what we call dreams.

Sir Oliver Lodge tells this story in his book “Man and the Universe.” In the North of England lived two friends of Mr. Ruskin—Mr. and Mrs. Severn. Mr. Severn was fond of yachting. One morning, quite early, he went out, leaving his wife sleeping. As the clock was striking seven she was awakened by a violent blow upon the mouth. Starting up, she put a handkerchief to her mouth to stop the supposed bleeding, but there was nothing wrong with her, and no person near her. At half-past nine her husband came in for breakfast. He was holding a handkerchief to his mouth. His wife asked him what was the matter, when he replied that the tiller had struck him a frightful blow upon the mouth. When asked further at what time the accident had hap-



pened, he replied: "I can tell exactly: it was as the clock was striking seven."

Such cases are very common; and they surely warrant Sir Oliver Lodge's conclusion. "Mind can communicate with mind by means other than any of the known organs of sense; the fact of telepathy has been established by a large number of experiments." The other things established by the Society for Psychical Research are automatic writing, trance speeches, apports, etc. These are facts observed and facts established. What is their explanation? The Society for Psychical Research will not commit itself to any one theory. Professor Barrett says that much is due to sub-consciousness; but much cannot be so explained. To me, at all events, the only complete explanation of the *whole* of this psychic phenomena is the fact that there exists a spiritual world which at times discloses itself to us directly, or by means of our own spiritual powers which remain in "tune with the Infinite" of which we are part. Much of the "supernatural" can be explained in a wholly natural (though not materialistic) way. But experience reveals the existence of an immense

margin which cannot be explained save on the supposition that a real spiritual world, outside ourselves, really exists and communicates with us. Is it unreasonable to believe that aid from above is sent through many channels by Him whose hands were nailed to the cross for our sins; by Him who is the Head of humanity, our Divine Lord and Master?

Why should it not be so? It is alleged that similar things occurred in Bible times: why should they not occur now? If God's good angel helped Peter out of a difficulty, why may He not help me? There is no law which we can set in operation that will command the angel of God to our order; but when the angel in any form intervenes, surely we have no right to say that nothing has taken place. Yet the greatest caution is necessary in speaking thus, since there is nothing to-day that has been put to a worse use than this. The Bible speaks of "lying spirits." Spiritualists themselves frankly admit that spirits do lie. That very fact calls for caution.

Take the case of Mr. Stead. Six months before he died he declared in print that he

had received a communication from the spirit world concerning the mode of his death: he was to be kicked to death in the streets of London. We all know that nothing of the kind took place. Numberless other supposed messages from the spirit world have proved to be equally false. Many "trance speeches" have fraud embroidered into their texture. How then shall we distinguish between the phenomena that are genuine and those which are false?

The Bible gives a simple and effective test for the "spirits." "Try the spirits," says St. John. But by what standard shall we try them? "Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God." The Incarnation of Jesus Christ with all its implications forms the test of truth or falsehood here. Modern spiritualism as a philosophical or pseudo-religious system denies Christ, and therefore, *as a system*, it must be denied by Christians. Whatever facts they advance, we receive as we receive all facts, but we repudiate their philosophy, which is definitely antagonistic to Jesus Christ. For the greatest fact in history is the fact of Jesus

Christ. The greatest person in history is the Person of Jesus Christ, and whatever denies the fact of the Person of Christ as revealed in history and Christian experience bears upon its brow the mark of falsehood. Yet psychical research has the utmost value for us. Many of the "messages" that are supposed to have come from the spirit world are vague, and many of them are demonstrably untrue. On the other hand, we have such an accumulation of "spiritual" experiences as almost to compel belief in the existence of the spirit world. The really *genuine* messages and psychical experiences are like the "taps" which are heard when men who are piercing a tunnel from different sides of the mountain approach each other. Nothing is seen, often all is vague, but the recurrence of those taps indicates the fact of intelligent life on the other side. And to be assured of as much as this is a great advance. Psychic experiences can never be demonstrative evidence to those who have not shared in them, but the fact that the testimony to their reality is so strong and persistent should at least protect the subject from contemptuous treatment.

But this is not sufficient; we need something more than phenomena of this order. Good as this is it is not good enough. Therefore, I invoke the witness of Jesus Christ. We need one to speak to us of that world who really knows it. His character must be above suspicion. He must be perfect. He must be one whom we can follow as an infallible master and guide. The only Person who fulfils these conditions is Jesus Christ, before whom I reverently bow. He claimed to know that world beyond the veil. "I came forth from the Father, and return to the Father." Not only did He claim to know it, but He lived in the two worlds—this and that—at once. He communed with the Father. He wrought mighty works in the power of God. Hear Him on the last night of His earthly life: "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you, for I go to prepare a place for you." Hear His last prayer: "Father, that which Thou hast given Me, I will that, where I am, they also may be with Me." Witness His last act: He said to the thief upon the Cross, "Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with

The Witness  
of Christ.

Me in Paradise." Hear His last word: "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." To Him that life beyond was a reality. To Him we owe all the best that can be known about God and man. If He is mistaken; if He—such an one—cannot be trusted, then we can know nothing at all about that life that is really worth knowing. Mere phenomena is useless to us for religious purposes unless it has Divine significance. More than this, He passed into that world and again emerged from it. On Good Friday His body was nailed to the cross. He died. Three days later He appeared, the victor over death. He manifested Himself as alive for forty days before His final withdrawal from this earth plane. The manifestations occurred in the open air, in the full light of a spring day, upon a mountain top, on a public highway. His manifestations in that glorified body did not take place in dark or dimly lighted chambers to the accompaniment of singing, and within a limited area. Everything was convincing, open, frank.

More than that, He influences men *now*. Jesus Christ is not dead. His spirit is still with His people. He directs human life, and

ever changes its character. He gives an ethical value to life. Men really experience His presence, and commune with Him. The effect of His action upon life calls for the cause alleged to produce it. If men will not receive His witness they will receive none at all. But I beg you to observe that the witness of Jesus Christ does not stand alone. Place it by the side of the other four I have invoked—Science, Reason, History, and Experience—and at once you perceive that it is their coronation. His witness confirms, correlates, and vitalises all the rest. It delivers us from vagueness, and allies us to God. Is not this fivefold witness overwhelming?

To believe that death does not end all; that our life continues beyond the grave—to believe this on the evidence of these four witnesses crowned by The Ethical  
Result. the witness of Jesus Christ—this gives seriousness to our life. It gives proportion to our life. It gives heroism to our life. It gives purity, consolation, and warning; for it says to every man and every woman, “As you sow, so shall you reap,” and “As you live here, so will you live yonder.” The future life is no





**WHAT “ETERNAL ” REALLY  
MEANS**



WHAT "ETERNAL" REALLY  
MEANS



## LECTURE IV

### WHAT "ETERNAL" REALLY MEANS

HITHERTO we have dealt with the general question of "Death and the Hereafter," and we have demonstrated, along five lines, that death does not end all. The personal self continues to exist on the other side of the veil. But we cannot be content with so much, or little, as this. Having gone so far we are bound now to go further. We cannot avoid asking what is the character of the life awaiting us on the other side, and what are the conditions of that life. These questions now present themselves for consideration. Before entering into this subject, however, there is a preliminary inquiry to be undertaken. The future life is associated in the Bible with the ideas of "eternity" and

the "eternal." The adjective "eternal" is applied in the Scriptures to the conditions of life—both bright and dark—upon the other side. Our present endeavour will be to understand exactly what the Bible means by the use of the word "eternal." It is idle for us to speak about "eternal punishment," or "eternal life," unless we know what the terms mean. Here, if anywhere, we need to know the meaning of words. May God grant unto us the inspiration of His Holy Spirit, as we address ourselves to the inquiry.

Eternity! It is a word that awakens within us the profoundest emotions. It falls upon us like the solemn tolling of some great bell, the vibrations of which possess the strange power of subduing our spirits and of making us pensive and serious. These deep vibrations hold us as with a spell. The very word "eternity" imposes awe upon the most frivolous spirit. And yet, while it thus subdues our spirits, the idea of eternity offers to the mind a great perplexity. It bewilders, stuns, and staggers us, this idea of a horizon without limit, an abyss without bottom—this immense

The Idea of  
Eternity.

immeasurable, unthinkable eternity. Men have sought to make the idea real to themselves by the use of images or pictures. At one time an illustration such as the following was commonly used: "Imagine," they said, "a mountain of rock a mile high and a mile broad rearing itself in all its terrifying grandeur. And imagine that to this mountain there comes once in a thousand years a little bird which carries away in its little beak one tiny grain of sand. When this little bird thus working has succeeded in removing the entire mountain, then the first second only of eternity will have begun." It was a prodigious illustration, invented in all good faith, but it was entirely unsuccessful. Instead of making clear what eternity was, it simply crushed the mind by its frightful weight. To conceive of eternity as the years of time multiplied by millions and billions and trillions is to beget in the mind a sense of unreality, and, finally, to create indifference. When the whip first falls upon the shoulders of a prisoner, his flesh is so sensitive that he shrieks in agony. But as the lashes continue to fall the flesh is gradually deadened; the nerves cease to respond, and the

whip finally falls upon dead flesh. In like manner the attempt to represent eternity by such a terrifying image as that which I have named has had the effect of hardening men by its very unreality. The mind reels before it, and the result is utter indifference. Men say, "Such conceptions are inconceivable; therefore, they are not true." It is time, then, that we should try and arrive at the truth concerning the use of the word "eternal" as set forth in the Bible.

Let us put aside every prejudice. Do not ask whether our conclusions are orthodox or heterodox; ask one question only: Are they true? In the Authorised Version several notable expressions occur which are known to all of us—*i.e.*, the terms "everlasting," "eternal," "for ever and ever." These expressions occur frequently in the Authorised Version, but it is significant that in the Revised Version they are changed or modified. The word "everlasting" disappears altogether from the pages of the Revised Version, being replaced by the word "eternal." In two notable passages this difference is emphasized—namely, in St. John iii. 16, where the Authorised

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Terms.



Version reads: "Whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The Revised Version changes this to: "Should not perish, but have eternal life." A second notable passage is that of St. Mathew xxv. 46, where the Authorised Version reads: "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal." The Revised Version renders the passage: "And these shall go away into eternal punishment; but the righteous into eternal life." This change of word is not capricious, there is a deep reason for it which will be apparent to us in the course of our study.

Meanwhile, it is interesting to notice that in Dr. Weymouth's version of the New Testament none of these terms, "eternal," "everlasting," "for ever and ever," occur. They are replaced by the expressions, *i.e.*, "the life of the ages" and "unto the ages." The change has been made in the interests of clear thought. Behind those English expressions—"eternal," "everlasting," "for ever and ever"—there lie one Hebrew word and two Greek words; the Hebrew word "olam," and the two Greek words "aion"

and "aionios." The simplest translation of these words is the English word "age"; hence Dr. Weymouth renders uniformly "The life of the ages," "belonging to an age," etc. The mere exchange of one word for another, however, supplies us with little information. If it is simply a question of substituting one word for another, we are exactly where we were before. For what is an age? The word is quite indefinite. An age may be long or short. We have therefore to inquire what the Bible means by an age.

The meaning of the word has to be determined largely by the context, since, as we shall see, it possesses different time-values. We must penetrate below that Hebrew word and those two Greek words to the idea, or ideas, which are beneath. In the Bible the word "age" is primarily a word of measurement—the measurement of things that are temporal. Amongst ourselves, to-day, we employ the word to indicate epochs, short or long. We speak of the various cycles through which our earth has passed as "ages." The geologist affirms that order has succeeded order in the development of the world. He speaks

The Bible  
Doctrine of  
the Ages.

of the ages through which the world has passed—the Eozoic, the Cambrian, the Silurian, the Devonian, the Carboniferous, the Perman, the Mesozoic, the Neozoic, and the Glacial. The age in which we now live is the age of Man. Science predicts that when this age is completed it will be succeeded by another.

The Bible uses the same word in exactly the same sense ; that is, as a term of temporal measurement. There is a well-defined doctrine of the "ages" in the Bible which we must clearly understand. The central passage is in Hebrews i. 2: "God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom He also made the ages." Here the "ages" are distinguished from the "cosmos," which is the usual word for the universal order. The apostle affirms that God, through Christ, made the ages. They change, and pass, but He remains unchanged. Before the ages He was, during the ages He is, after the ages He will be. He precedes them, He is working in

them, and, when their work is ended, God will remain the Eternal One at the end as He was at the beginning, and as He has been throughout the process. That is the doctrine of the ages as set forth in this chapter, and in other places of the New Testament. Moreover, the history of God's dealings with man is set forth in the New Testament in terms of the "ages." Read that classic passage: "To make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery which, from all ages, hath been hid in God who created all things" (Eph. iii. 9). Our Lord Jesus Christ came into this world—when? "At the end of the ages hath Christ been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Heb. ix. 26). So the Revised Version. Dr. Weymouth's version is more emphatic: "Christ has appeared, once for all, at the close of the ages, in order to do away with sin by the sacrifice of Himself." The thought is clear. Age has succeeded age in the Divine plan for man, and at the close of all preceding ages our Lord Jesus Christ appeared. Observe the difference: it is not at the end of the "world," but at the end of the ages or epochs, that He appeared.

His coming inaugurated a new "age," with the display of new powers. In Hebrews vi. 5, the writer, speaking about the new dispensation, employs the <sup>The New Age.</sup> phrase the "powers of the coming age." In that age we live to-day. Ours is the Gospel dispensation, the Gospel age, the Gospel epoch. But this age will end just as the others have done. Our Lord Himself specifically says so in those marvellous parables recorded in the thirteenth chapter of St. Matthew. He speaks about the Kingdom of Heaven resembling a net laid down into the sea; all kinds are gathered into the net; but at the end of the age the great division is to be effected. This age is to end, and it will be succeeded by another, designated by our Lord "the age to come." To His disciples, who gave up all for Him—houses, brethren, sisters, mothers, children, and land—He promised they should "receive a hundred-fold now in this time, and in the age to come eternal life." So there is in the Bible a well-defined doctrine of the "ages," which we need to grasp if we are to understand the Bible teaching concerning the future.

What is the relation of Christ to these

ages? In a word He is Master of them all. They pass; He remains the same. In two classic passages (Eph. i. 21 and iii. 21) St. Paul declares Christ to be Master of "all the ages." He is God, blessed for ever, the originator and sustainer of all things. In the strict sense, God alone is "eternal." He alone is independent of the ages, having no beginning and no end. The world is not eternal. It had a beginning; it will end. Science, as well as religion, tells us that. Man is not eternal, for he also had a beginning, however great may be his destiny. God alone, having no beginning and no ending, is, in the strictest and most rigorous sense of the word, eternal. In no case does the Bible apply to man the words "eternal" or "everlasting" in the rigorous sense of his having no beginning and no end. God's eternity is absolute. Your eternity and mine are relative. The relative use of the word is quite clear to those who, without prejudice, read their Bible. Wherever, in the English Bible, the term "for ever" is applied to human institutions, it does not signify endlessness in the sense in which it is applied to God. It means rather "endless

within the sphere of its own existence"; a time limit being set to it.

The context in each case determines the meaning. Thus of Aaron's priesthood it is

Examples. said (Exod. xl. 15): "Thou shalt

anoint them, as thou didst their father, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office; and their anointing shall be to them for an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations." Everlasting here is not absolute endlessness, but relative endlessness; the term being defined by the following sentence—*i.e.*, endless within the time of the duration of the Aaronic priesthood. While the priesthood lasted, these men were to be priests. So of the Temple it is said (1 Kings viii. 13): "I have surely built thee an house of habitation, a place for thee to dwell in for ever." "For ever" here cannot mean endlessness in the absolute sense. Indeed, did not our Lord say of the Temple that not one stone should be left upon another? The Temple was the dwelling-place of God within the period of its duration.

Again, in Deut. xv. 17, we have the case of a slave who had the right, at a certain

time, to claim his liberty. But "if he say unto you I will not go out from thee, because he loveth thee and thy house, because he is well with thee; then thou shalt take an awl, and thrust it through his ear into the door, and he shall be thy servant for ever." Surely not for ever absolutely, but "for ever" within the lifetime of the man. Yet another illustration. You remember the case of Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, who lied in order to obtain gold and raiment. Elisha pronounced sentence upon him thus: "The leprosy of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever." But surely the descendants of that man, who lived three thousand years ago, are not blighted with leprosy for that one sin of their ancestor! The thing is unthinkable. Obviously the word "for ever" is used in a relative sense. So long as that family endured the leprosy would endure.

So we must not press the term "for ever" to mean, of necessity, endlessness. In very many cases it is a time word, and refers, not to endless time, but to a limited time. The context must always determine the meaning of any particular passage.

To sum up this part of the study. Primarily



the word "age" is used in the Bible as a term of measurement, and a term of time. God transcends the ages. He is before them; He is in them, and He remains when they have gone. Man and the universe are created; they are within the ages, and are subject to the laws of the ages.

But there is also another use of the word "age" in the Bible: it is employed as a term of quality; to indicate character-

istics. Thus St. Paul, writing to the Romans, says: "Be not conformed to this age." Obviously, he uses the word "age" to indicate the moral characteristics of the particular epoch in which he was living; just as we, to-day, might speak of the marks of the age in which we live. Again, the word is used to set forth the characteristics of Christ's work for us: "I saw an angel flying, having an eternal gospel to proclaim;" "He gave us eternal consolation;" "Christ obtained eternal redemption." Here the word is used as a term of quality; it is the equivalent of the term "divine." In all such places there is no thought of a time element at all. It is the transcendence of time that is indicated. The Gospel, the con-

A Term of  
Quality.

solation, the redemption are all beyond time. So the word "age," which underlies an English "eternal," "everlasting," and "for ever," is used in the two senses—first as an adjective of time, and secondly as an adjective of quality. All this is general.

I now come to the heart of my theme. Man's destiny is everywhere associated in the Bible with this thought of the Eternal. More than forty times in the New Testament we read of "eternal life," once of "eternal punishment," once of "eternal destruction," and twice of "eternal fire." In every case, let us remember, the word "age" is the best English word to use. So we must read with Dr. Weymouth, in place of eternal life, "the life of the ages"; instead of "eternal punishment," "the punishment of the ages"; instead of "everlasting destruction," "the destruction of the ages"; and instead of "eternal fire," "the fire of the ages." These renderings are uniform, and strictly true.

Now we have seen that the word "age" in the Bible, as regards man, has two uses: it is

a term of time measurement and

**Eternal Life.** a term of quality. To which of these two orders does the term "eternal

life" apply? When we read of "eternal life," with which of these two meanings shall we associate the thought? The reply is simple. Our Lord Himself defines it for us. Ninety-nine times in the Fourth Gospel the word "life" occurs, and more than forty times in the New Testament the term "eternal life." In St. John xvii. 3 we have the only definition given in the New Testament of the term "eternal life." "This," said our Lord, "is eternal life: that they should know Thee, the only true God, and Him whom Thou didst send even Jesus Christ." So eternal life<sup>in that place</sup> is qualitative and not quantitative. Listen further to the words of our Lord, John iii. xv.: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth may in Him have eternal life." The rendering of the R.V. is striking; it is "in Him" that life is found. Again, in John v. 24, "Verily, verily I say unto you He that heareth my word, and believeth Him that sent me, hath eternal life and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life."

Again in John v. 39, "Ye search the Scrip-

tures, because you think that in them you

have eternal life, and you will not  
 Life of the  
 Kingdom. come to Me that ye may have life."

John vi. 54: "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood has eternal life." Eternal life, then, as defined by our Lord Jesus Christ is something moral and Divine. It consists in "knowing" God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. To "know" God is not to intellectually apprehend Him, but to be morally harmonious with Him. Now if you turn to the Synoptic Gospels you will find an interchangeable term used by our Lord. Our Lord speaks of "life" thus: "And if thy foot cause thee to stumble, cut it off: it is good for thee to enter into life maimed rather than having thy two feet to be cast into hell." Mark ix. 45-47. But He continues: "And if thine eye cause thee to stumble, cast it out: it is good for thee to enter into the Kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell." The word "life" is used interchangeably with the phrase "the Kingdom of God."

2. In Matthew vii. 14-21 our Lord again uses the same two words interchangeably: "For

narrow is the gate that leadeth unto life." Verse 21: "Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." Putting these two facts together, we perceive that the following truths emerge: First, that "eternal life" consists of the soul's vital fellowship with God through Jesus Christ. Second, that this vital fellowship with God is the same thing as entering the Kingdom of Heaven; and, thirdly, that this eternal life is a present experience and a present possession. Here and now we enjoy the Divine gift. From all this it is clear that the term "eternal life" is not a term of quantity but a term of quality. Eternal life is not natural human life prolonged indefinitely into the future, but it is essential Divine life, and endless because essential. This concerns what we may call the bright side of the idea of "eternal."

But what shall we say concerning the dark side? We have seen the glorious, what about the inglorious? To indicate the dark side four terms are used. The Dark Side. First a term that is used once only in the New Testament: "All their sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of man; but whoso-

ever shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin" (Mark iii. 29). Remark: It is the sin that is "eternal." There is no reference here to the punishment of the sin; it is its nature that is defined. It is the offence that is designated, and not the person who has offended. The second word is found in St. Matthew xxv. 46: "And these shall go away into eternal punishment" (the punishment of the ages), "but the righteous into eternal life." The third word is "eternal destruction" (2 Thess. i. 10). The last word is the word "fire." Our Lord says, "They shall be cast into the eternal fire." Carefully notice that it is the fire that is eternal. These terms "eternal punishment," "eternal destruction," "eternal sin" are adjectives of quality to define the nature of the thing stated. They are not time words at all. What is indicated lies entirely outside the idea of time. The first emphasis is not upon duration. Indeed, the question of duration is not at all touched in the Bible. It is left quite open. In a later lecture we shall see more precisely what this means.

To sum up. I have tried, without theo-

logical bias of any kind, to state in outline what the Bible teaches about the "eternal." The revelation of Summary. Almighty God to mankind has been limited to this age and "to the next." Beyond that the Bible gives no detailed revelation. When our Lord Jesus Christ spake about that awful sin for which there was no forgiveness, He said: "It shall not be forgiven him neither in this age nor in the age that is to come." He said nothing more than that. The Bible does not throw light upon all the coming ages. Nowhere in its sacred pages can we find any reference to the "infinite" and final goal of all things so far as man is concerned. Divine revelation does not tell us what there will be millions of years from to-day! Revelation is more practical than that. It limits itself to this life and "the next"—to these two and these two only; to this age and "the age to come." Revelation does not bewilder and oppress us by speaking of that which no mind can possibly conceive. The Bible message is terribly urgent: "Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation." The gift of eternal life is offered to us here and now, through

Jesus Christ our Lord. On the other hand, the Bible does not say that the punishment is for millions and billions of years. Of the worst sin it says that it shall not be forgiven neither in this age nor in the age to come. These are Christ's own words. We dare not go beyond them. This is our "age." We shall pass from it to the next age. We live on, and the way in which we live here will determine how we shall live beyond. If we are bad here we shall be bad there—even worse. It is the law, the principle of all things. One "age" of human life determines what the next "age" will be. If we live without Christ here we shall start yonder without Him. We are made for God, for the eternal life. And I declare as the deepest conviction of my soul, not simply as a theologian, not as a professional speaker, but as an apostle of the great Lord and Master whom I humbly and, alas! so poorly represent, that the only possible way in which we can now possess that eternal life which will ensure our true future is to be in union with Jesus Christ. We gain eternal life, we gain God, we gain all the uplift of our souls alone in union with Him who unveils God



to us, and who died for our redemption: Refuse Christ as He is made known to you and afterwards refuse Light and you fall under the eternal law of retribution from which there is no escape. "Whatsoever a man sows that shall he also reap." Christ alone is our hope, our Redeemer. "Who-soever shall fall upon this stone shall be broken, but on whosoever it shall fall it will grind him to powder."



**THE LIFE BEYOND: HEAVEN**



## LECTURE V

### THE LIFE BEYOND: HEAVEN

WE may now review the ground we have traversed together. We commenced by defining Death religiously and scientifically. Then we proceeded to ask, "Does Death End All?" and to that question a fivefold answer was given. Many, however, declare themselves to be dissatisfied with this reply. Against it they offer certain arguments in the name of Reason and in the name of Religion.

Review.

They object, first, upon the ground of appearances, and, secondly, in the name of a discredited materialism. Superficial reasoning would certainly lead to the conclusion, in the presence of a corpse, that all was over. But if there is one thing to-day that a more perfect reasoning teaches, it is that appearances are not the things in themselves—

"things are not what they seem." It is puerile to say that because the body is now immobile in death, the real self is extinguished. Reason takes us beyond the appearance, and compels us (as we have seen) to search for an invisible reality of which the appearance is the temporary manifestation. Certain writers vehemently protest against this method on the ground that it goes beyond what is strictly scientific and becomes purely philosophical. But it is impossible to avoid being philosophical if we are to attain the complete truth. Mr. Hugh Elliot, who has entered the lists against Professor Bergson, holds philosophy in cheap contempt, yet he himself is compelled to admit that for the establishment of vital truths a "working hypothesis" is necessary. Strictly speaking, science must become to a certain extent philosophical in order to make any progress at all. To establish material facts is useless unless their meaning is also rendered clear: for it is their meaning that matters.

Reason, therefore, does not fulfil its complete function if it arrests itself at the corpse and declares that the cessation of animal

functions is also the cessation of life. We *must* get beyond the appearance of things to the realities behind.

Objectors also advance a discredited materialism. Their method is to start with the hypothesis that everything is material and then to try and fit the facts of life into this hypothesis. But, as we have already seen, the old materialism which permitted men to take this position is to-day entirely discredited. The average man, however, does not know this. He is still reading reprints of out-of-date books published in the interests of Rationalism. As a fact, there is nothing on the side of reason that can be honestly urged against the truth of survival.

On the other hand, objection is made in the name of religion to the position we regard as demonstrably true. But a careful examination will show that this objection is based upon lacerated or misapplied texts of Scripture. Men who lack imagination, and who are ignorant of the historic and theological growth of the Bible, use the Bible as an arsenal of texts without reference to the true principles of interpretation. Hence the amazing theories put forth in the name of

“Scriptural authority.” This “wresting of the Scriptures” must not be allowed to obscure the truth of survival as demonstrated along the lines that we have considered together. Neither logical nor religious objection can break the force of the facts we have considered. We have sought to establish, then, that death does not end all, and that we continue to live on the other side of the

veil. But what kind of life awaits us there? Is it a simple continuation of the present life, or is it an

existence entirely different? Can we really know definitely—not in detail, but in a broad sense—the kind of life that awaits us on the other side of the veil? Many of our contemporaries declare that we cannot know. Upon this subject the general temper of the world to-day is agnostic.

A great change has passed over the minds of people in our generation with regard to the future life. Formerly,

Changes in  
Thought.

preachers represented heaven and hell as fixed states. When a man died it was said that he passed at once to his reward or punishment, and that his state was for ever fixed. To-day that old con-



ception is challenged largely under two influences which have been silently but surely at work upon the minds of men in our time. On the side of religion it is challenged by the truth of God's Fatherhood, and on the side of science by the hypothesis of evolution. Both of these influences have had an immense effect upon present-day thought, and have caused people to hold in suspense their judgment with regard to the question of the Hereafter. The result has been threefold. On the part of many, the revolt has been complete against the old conceptions of heaven and hell. On the part of many more there is a growing indifference to the whole question. The average men of the world say: "We know nothing about a life beyond. Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die. As to the future, we will face it if it comes, and if we have been mistaken we will apologise like men and say that we were in error." But *pari passu* with these positions there is in progress a serious attempt at reconstruction. Hence we have to-day a number of conflicting theories concerning the character and conditions of the life beyond. Which of these theories shall

we accept? Which line shall we follow, that will satisfy at once our conscience and our reason and also be true to Scripture? I propose to follow a line which is at once Biblical and scientific—a line which, if we follow it carefully, will conduct us to the truth concerning the conditions of the future life. I shall not rely upon dogmatic statement but upon the nature of things. And I shall make my final appeal to Jesus Christ, in whose infallible word we shall hear the voice of the eternal order. We begin then by considering the bright side of the beyond, or what is commonly called Heaven.

Before proceeding to definition and to exposition, let me call attention to one significant fact: Everywhere in the New Testament heaven is treated from a practical point of view, and never theoretically. It is presented to us as a thought which provides a moral force for our practical life upon this earth plane. The attitude of Jesus Christ towards heaven makes this clear. He related heaven to our mortal life in three ways. First, the thought of it becomes an element in the

Heaven a  
Practical  
Thought.

formation of character. "Do not lay up for yourself treasure upon earth where moth and rust doth corrupt, but lay up treasures in heaven." That is, there is nothing material in the life beyond. You cannot send your gold on before you, nor carry it

with you. The only thing we can take with us is ourselves—our

The  
Testimony of  
Jesus.

character. Our Lord declares that heaven has a relation to earth from this point of view—it helps to form our character on this earth plane. It has a second practical result upon life—it raises our estimate of the value of our fellow-men. Listen to Jesus as He speaks of the children. "See that you stumble not one of the least of these little ones, for I say unto you their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven." It is a mysterious word, but it is severely practical. We are to treat people here below the more tenderly and humanely because of their relationships in the world beyond. Thirdly, our Lord connects heaven with the idea of a perfect social order upon the earth. "Thy will be done on earth." How? "As it is done in heaven." He thus links heaven with the perfect social order. You want life

to be true, harmonious, and beautiful! Then take your pattern from the higher and not from the lower. In that higher sphere the order is perfect. "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." In our Lord's own personal life that same practical note is sounded. He said: "I am come down from heaven." Why? "Not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." So that with Jesus the idea of heaven was never connected with mere poetry or hypothesis. It was related to the practical side of living on this earth plane.

If we turn from Jesus to His apostles we find exactly the same thing. How do the apostles regard heaven in its relation to our present earth life?

Testimony of  
the Apostles.

From three points of view. In heaven there is the inspiring presence of Christ. In heaven there are the Divine principles for life. In heaven there is the Divine programme for life. Jesus Christ is there to direct and to inspire His people who live here below. The power flowing from His wonderful presence redeems, energizes, and directs all souls that are harmonious with Him. If there is one fact capable of

demonstration it is this: that here and now Jesus Christ does influence the spirits of men and women who have affinity with Him: He is close to us. "I am with you always, even to the end." "I will never leave you nor forsake you." Heaven, to the apostles, was not a distant star, but a realm quite close to us.

But heaven also stands for those Divine principles by which human life should be governed. St. Paul says: "Our citizenship is in heaven, from whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. iii. 20). The original word behind the English "citizenship" is the word from which we derive our English word "politics." So we may read the passage "Our politics are in heaven." The apostle means that the real principles which should govern human life are found, not in the midst of humanity as it is, but above humanity, in the higher sphere known as heaven. The third thing is that heaven is shown as providing God's programme for human society. In Revelation xxi. a new social order is set forth: "I saw a new heaven and a new earth." Here is the

The New  
Social Order.

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true life for man—falsehood being utterly abolished and truth being completely enthroned. This true social order is set forth not in terms of earth, but in terms of heaven. The tabernacle of God comes down from above, and God Himself dwells with His sons and daughters. The superior order governs the inferior order. These practical representations of heaven should dispose of the common sneer that “reflections upon heaven are a waste of time.” Everywhere the New Testament regards heaven as possessing a practical force for the direction of our life here below.

Now we can advance a little. We must frankly admit that there has been much non-sense talked about heaven. There  
Nonsense  
talked about  
Heaven. are many sentimental hymns that it would be well to utterly discard. Many childish conceptions of heaven still fill the minds of grown-up people. Many foolish pictures have been drawn of it. Many similes of heaven used in the New Testament have been pushed to an unwarranted extreme. Many popular conceptions of heaven are ridiculously astray. Yet, having said that, I have the right to appeal to intelligent

people and bid them distinguish between these childish conceptions of heaven and the sober truth as set forth in the pages of the New Testament.

The New Testament has really very little to say about heaven. Its details are surprisingly few. But the principles it enunciates concerning it are Details  
Meagre. unmistakable, and they go down to the very quick of life. But what do we mean by heaven? In the Bible the word heaven is used in two or three different senses. It is important to notice this in the interests of clear thought. "Heaven" is a name for the firmament. "The windows of heaven were opened up" (Gen. vii. 11). This, of course, is pure poetry; it is a picturesque way of narrating a storm. Heaven is also a general name for the spirit world. God dwells there, and Christ dwells there. Of our Lord it is said in the New Testament, "He has gone into heaven:" "He was received from them into heaven." "Heaven" is also used to indicate a progressive spiritual order. On the night that our Lord suffered He said: "I am going whence I came. I came from the Father, and I return to the

Father . . . to prepare a place for you. In My Father's house there are many abiding-places." The idea is that of gradation, of progress.

The same idea is set forth in the book of Kings: "Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee." It is not one, but a succession of heavens that is named. St. Paul, writing to the Corinthians, says, "I know a man in Christ . . . caught up, even to the third heaven." "Many mansions," "heaven of heavens," "the third heaven," the idea contained in these phrases is that of gradation, of a progressive order. And why not? The order here below is progressive from the minutest forms of life, visible only through the most powerful microscope, to man, who is the crown of terrestrial creation. Man himself is subject to the same order. Progress is the mark of his life. He goes from strength to strength, from knowledge to knowledge.

A progressive order, on the other side, fits in exactly with what we know to be God's will for mankind as revealed in His past dealings with the race. These indications of a progressive order "beyond" are certainly not very pre-

A Progressive  
Order.



cise, but they leave open a wide door for thought. Heaven, then, may be said to be a real spiritual sphere, and graded. Presently we will return to this part of the subject.

Meanwhile, let us ask: Where is heaven? The "freethinkers" of our time ask with contempt, "Where is heaven?"

They tell us they have looked Locality. through the telescope and seen Mars, Venus, Jupiter, Saturn, and numberless other stars and planets, but they have never seen heaven. All of which is entirely irrelevant. The fact is that heaven, that spiritual world of which the Bible speaks, does not come within the range of the telescope. Spiritual forces are not discovered by material instruments. Thought is not discoverable by the microscope. The microscope can reveal the secret of the fibres of the brain, but it cannot discover thought. Thought is intangible. So is love. Love is invisible; thought is invisible; honour is invisible; virtue is invisible. All the great spiritual forces are invisible, and that spiritual world known to us as heaven belongs to this order.

Yet while science can give us no informa-

tion concerning the reality of that spiritual world, it does clear the way, from the human side, to belief in its existence. More than thirty years ago there appeared a remarkable book entitled "The Unseen Universe." It was known to be written by two accredited scientists, although at first their names did not appear. In a later edition the names of the authors appeared upon the title page, and they were then recognised, not only as two of the foremost scientists of the time, but also as two of the foremost members of the Presbyterian Church—Professor Balfour Stewart and Professor Tait. No one could assail the scientific standing of these gentlemen, but a few ungenerous materialists declared that these Christians had allowed their science to be prejudiced by their religious views. Time, however, has vindicated their position. The thesis of the book is this: that the material universe beheld by us is a manifestation of an invisible spiritual universe; that this visible universe has issued from the invisible, and that one day it will be reabsorbed into the invisible.

Our world is wearing out. One day it will

be impossible for life to exist upon our planet. Eventually all the planets will fall into the sun, the sun itself will be absorbed by a mightier body, and, finally, the whole visible universe will be reabsorbed into the invisible, out of which it proceeded. That is the thesis of the book. The event certainly seems very far away, and we need not trouble ourselves about it. But the principle enunciated, and which is to-day becoming to be generally accepted, carries with it certain nearer consequences for ourselves. For what is true of the macrocosm is true of the microcosm. We, who are little human worlds, have proceeded from an invisible universe. Here we are incarnate beings during the short span called life. When the body has finished its work it changes its form, being resolved by chemistry into its component parts. It disappears as a body; the "whole" from which it came, calls it back again.

To-day science tells us that the base of all matter is spiritual. The old materialism is entirely discredited. The atomic theory of matter, which for more than a century held the field, has, through the discovery of radium, been greatly changed. The "atom"

is no longer the ultimate, it can be resolved into hundreds of electrons. Professor Clifford, the materialist, predicted that the day would come when we should discover that matter is at the bottom electrical. His prediction has been verified. The base of everything visible is not material but spiritual.

In the light of modern thought we can no longer afford to scoff at the existence of a spiritual world. We may not be able to conceive what it is like ; it may wholly baffle our imagination ; but we cannot deny its reality in the name of science. Everywhere the Bible represents that spiritual world as being close to us. Christ is in it. At the transfiguration two men suddenly appeared from it, and when their brief mission was over returned to it. St. Stephen, lying on the streets of Jerusalem, all bloody with the wounds the stones had made upon his flesh, cried : " I see heaven open and Jesus Christ." What St. Stephen saw, millions since his day have seen. The experience is too common to be seriously denied. Christ taught that heaven is near to earth. " There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of the "great cloud of witnesses" watching us as we run our race. Heaven, then, is that great spiritual world which lies not far away among the stars, but close to us. "Heaven lies around us in our infancy." Jesus is there. God is better known there. The angels are there. The spirits of just men "being made perfect" are there. The Bible takes this spiritual world for granted. Modern science, in showing us that the base of all matter is spiritual, makes belief in heaven at least rational.

What are the conditions of its life? The Bible makes no dogmatic pronouncement upon the matter. It sets forth the character of that life by means Conditions of its Life. of images. We must be clear upon this point. Too many confuse the image with the reality it expresses. We must not imagine that upon the other side we shall sit upon a cloud, a crown upon our head, and a harp in our hand. The child's hymn—

"I want to be an angel,  
And with the angels stand;  
A crown upon my forehead,  
And harp within my hand"—

is really very misleading. We should be far better without that verse. A child will never be an angel. We shall be human on the "other side" as we are on this side. Many hymns about heaven are neither Scripturally nor scientifically true. We must pass behind the Bible pictures to the essential ideas underlying them. And these ideas are mainly two. The Bible represents heaven as embracing a social and a personal life. First of all, social. Two comprehensive pictures drawn by our Lord represent it to us. "Then shall the righteous shine forth in the kingdom of their Father." The life beyond, on its bright side, is represented as a kingdom; the kingdom of the Father. A kingdom stands for order and a corporate life. Heaven is that. It is an empire, but an empire under Divine Fatherhood. In this it stands in contrast with all other empires. What are the empires of this world? A mass of heterogeneous elements kept together by police, soldiery, "Dreadnoughts," and fear. They are artificially established and artificially maintained.

The empire on the other side is the empire of the Father. That is to say, it possesses a real solidarity. The life is corporate and

social; for social life is a necessity where intelligent beings congregate. But it is an empire under Fatherhood. The bond is not artificial, but affection-  
Empire and  
Home.
ate. Men work, not against each other, but for each other, because all are loyal to the Father who is the centre of all. Hence our Lord also represents heaven as a home. "In my Father's house." A home and a kingdom stand at the two extremes of the social idea. The kingdom is the whole; the home the part, and the part is the unit of the whole. "My Father's House!" It conveys the idea of the family. The two ideas are necessary for the complete thought which unites individual liberty with corporate action. There is the Fatherhood in both. The empire idea is united with the family idea. So the dream of mankind is at last realised. The true empire is a moral union of kingdom and home. When our Lord speaks of "the kingdom of My Father" and "My Father's house" He reveals a state for which man has ever been groping. Life there, then, is social and personal. There is no clash between the two, for they are united under the Fatherhood of God.

Beyond this double general representation of heaven our Lord reveals certain principles of its life. First of all, in that

Principles  
of its Life.

life, all conventional relationships disappear. There will be no marriage as now. "In the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage." The only marriages there are marriages of the soul. Spiritual affinities alone will bind people together. Sometimes we are asked whether the human ties that exist on this side of the veil will exist on that. The answer is that if the ties are spiritual they will remain unsevered. If they are simply animal, they will die with the animal. There are no conventional ties there; all are real. On the other side, also, there is a genuine human life. We do not cease to be human in heaven. As we are personal beings here, we shall be personal there. As we are responsible beings here, we shall be responsible there. As we are moral beings here, we shall be moral there. The divine and radical law of human morality operates in all worlds where human beings may be found. Life there is also progressive. A popular catechism tells us



that "the righteous are made perfect at death." There is not a word in the Bible to warrant such a statement. Death has no power to produce perfection. Death is a mere incident in life. We die imperfect, weak, worldly, prejudiced, untrained. Thousands of Christians die with baby souls.

They have never grown up. Upon this side there is no sudden leap Progress. from babyhood to manhood. The same is true of the other side. Babyhood, in all worlds, is exchanged for manhood only by means of education and discipline. We go to school here to be trained. Christians who die undeveloped will have to go to school on the other side. We go to Christ to be developed. Progress is the law of our life. "Till we all come to a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. iv. 13). God's work goes on in the soul after death. "He which began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ." Thus there can be no dead level in heaven. As Père Monsabré says: "Heaven is not a vast circus where each remains nailed to his place, hypnotized by the contemplation of the

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Divine Beauty." There will be progress in knowledge. "Now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I have been known" (1 Cor. xiii. 12). There will be progress in love, progress in service, progress in holiness. "He that is holy let him be more holy. He that is righteous let him be more righteous" (Rev. xxii. 11). We go "from glory unto glory." This, then, is the Biblical account of heaven. It harmonizes with the entire scheme of things.

The principles here set forth in the Bible are the same principles which operate in the whole universe. What preparation should we make for that life? We cannot enter upon it by magic. We cannot pass in a moment from hoarseness to finished singing, nor in a moment from physical corruption to perfect physical health. Nor can we by any trick pass from a life of sin to perfection in holiness. Let us grasp the truth of the unity and continuity of our life. Wherever we live, in this world or in any other, it is we who live, spiritual beings. As we lie down to our last sleep in death for good or evil, exactly so shall we rise to the life

The  
Preparation.

beyond. At death the envelope of flesh is pierced, and we pass into a fuller and truer life. The beyond is the continuation of this life, for good or evil. Heaven and hell begin now. "Myself am heaven or hell." Our citizenship is in heaven or hell now. Every man now gravitates towards or from God. Beyond that same gravitation continues. We get nearer to Him or further from Him.

The cruellest mistake people make is to imagine they can live a sinful life here below, and then at the last send for priest or clergyman to perform the hollow miracle of obliterating the past and preparing them for the future by means of prayer or sacraments. It is ghastly, this charlatanism asked for and performed in the name of religion. And it is utterly futile. If we are to enter that kingdom we must enter it now. Our Lord Jesus Christ said: "Ye must be born again. Except a man be born again he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven." The man who is born again—regenerated—has heaven within him, and at death he passes into the sphere for which his spirit is fit. Some of us have friends on the other side,

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Some of us have children there. A friend of mine lost a child. He sent me a card printed in silver, and containing these words: "In memory of little Donald, lent to us for two years; the sunshine of our home, recalled by the Father, now at school with angels for his tutors." A hope like that is worth much, and it is warranted by the revelation of Jesus Christ. Then let us live our life here below so that we shall one day join the loved ones who have gone before, and, best of all, join Him who, for us, bore the bitter cross and won our redemption that where He is there may we be also.

**THE LIFE BEYOND: HELL**



## LECTURE VI

### THE LIFE BEYOND: HELL

NO more terrible topic than that which we are now called upon to consider can occupy our thought; yet it is necessary to deal with it quite fearlessly, keeping nothing back. All harshness, flippancy, and sentiment are here scandalously out of place. He who speaks of this subject must do so with compassion in his heart, with a keen sense of responsibility, and with the utmost seriousness.

We have seen that our life continues beyond the tomb. We have already meditated upon the bright side of that "beyond." But is it all bright? Is <sup>The Problem.</sup> there no dark side to the picture? Numerous answers have been given to this question. There is the Catholic answer which declares dogmatically that the wicked will be tormented day and night for ever and ever,

without ceasing. "Throughout the countless ages of eternity their torture will know no end." There is the Universalist answer, which predicts that one day everything will come right, and all men will be saved. And there is the annihilationist answer, which affirms that the wicked will be "burned up root and branch," wholly ceasing to be. These three great answers divide the world to-day in one or another of their many varieties. On the other hand, thousands of persons are utterly perplexed, knowing not what to believe, while thousands more remain silent, fearing to commit themselves to any definite statement. Am I not correct in saying there are hundreds of Christian ministers to-day who rarely preach upon the subject, not because they are cowards, but because they do not know what to say? They prefer, therefore, to preserve a discreet silence. In the present perplexity is it possible for us to arrive at the truth? Is there any statement of the case that is at once scientifically, ethically, and biblically true? For any statement that is of worth must combine these three elements. Purely dogmatic statements are discredited in



advance, from whichever party they proceed. Religious truth cannot be ethically or scientifically false. All truth is one, and all separate truths must harmonise with each other and with the whole. I believe it is possible to state the facts concerning retribution in a manner that is at once scientifically, ethically, and biblically true, and it is to this task that I now address myself.

The first thing to do—both necessary and unpleasant—is to clear the ground of some theological rubbish which has hidden the essential truth from us. There are theories and statements about hell which are obviously unscientific, unethical, and unbiblical; which jar upon the intellect and upon the soul, and which shock our sense of justice. This theological rubbish includes such teaching as —(1) That the unbaptized go to hell simply because they are unbaptized. This is wicked nonsense, unworthy of one moment's consideration. It is amazing that any one has ever been found ready to believe it; so monstrous is it—so contrary to the character of God, so opposed to the evangel of Christ. It is fit only to be flung with contempt upon

Clearing the  
Ground.

the scrap-heap of exploded falsehoods. (2) It includes also the idea, still prevailing in certain quarters, that the heathen who have never had the opportunity to hear about Jesus Christ will be punished in hell for ever for their involuntary ignorance. This, too, is not worth discussing. It is utterly unethical, inhuman, and unintelligent, to say nothing of being definitely unbiblical. It too must go upon the rubbish-heap. I include also under the general head of theological rubbish all those fanciful ideas of hell which have held the field for many generations. For example, the representation in the Talmud of seven abodes in hell. In each abode there are 7000 caverns. In each cavern there are 7000 clefts, and in each cleft there are 7000 serpents to bite the wicked. This is unhealthy imagination, unworthy of a moment's thought. I also include under the head of "rubbish" all those descriptions of hell which are found in books like the Koran and in certain Christian theological treatises. When Jonathan Edwards spoke of "a lake of fire in the centre of the world in which the wicked will lie sensible for ever with

billows of fire always rolling over them," he used language which is wholly unjustifiable from every point of view. Lastly, I would include under the heading of theological rubbish statements such as the following by the Reverend Father Furniss, set forth in his book for children, entitled "The Light of Hell." This representative of the Redeemer says: "Little child, if you go to hell there will be a devil at your side to strike you." He will go on striking you every minute for ever and ever without stopping. The first stroke will make your body as bad as the body of Job, covered from head to foot with sores. The second stroke will make your body twice as bad as the body of Job. The third stroke will make your body three times as bad as the body of Job. The fourth stroke will make your body four times as bad as the body of Job. How, then, will your body be after the devil has been striking it every moment for a hundred million years without stopping?" How came such language from any human pen? It is blasphemous and ghastly—the creation of a disordered brain itself the product of a vicious theology.

There is nothing in the Bible to warrant these horrible statements. They are unscientific, unethical, and unbiblical. They are human nightmares—the creations of men who have allowed their imagination to run away with them: good men, doubtless, many of them, and perfectly sincere, but who have mistaken human theology for religion, and who have little idea of scientific biblical exegesis. All misconceptions such as these should be repudiated once and for all by the Christian Church. We ought never again to be called upon to attack them, so completely should they pass away. These exaggerations probably account for much of the revolt from the Church that we experience to-day. Moreover, they defeat their own ends by their obvious untruth. They strike a false note! They do not deter people from doing wrong, from getting drunk, from fighting, from living low animal lives. In the countries where hell is thus vividly preached the intellectual and moral standard is lower than elsewhere. The people know deep down in their hearts that these representations are false, hence they have no effect upon their morals. But let

The Passing  
of the Night-  
mare.

us be just, and not blame Christianity for these exaggerations, which contradict and misrepresent its teachings.

As it is absolutely necessary to know where we are, I have been compelled to commence by removing these theological absurdities out of our way. Let

The Word  
"Hell."

us now come to the constructive side of the subject. What does the word "hell" mean? It is an English word, which means to cover, to conceal, to hide. It is a first cousin of the word "hole." From the pages of the Revised Version the word "hell" disappears excepting in two places, where it is retained for a particular reason. In the Revised Version it is replaced by the original words, which are three: First there is the Hebrew "Sheol" with its Greek equivalent "Hades." These two words are extremely elastic and vague. They mean, generally, the place of the departed. Sometimes they are translated "pit," sometimes "grave." No details are given as to the life in Sheol or Hades. Once in parable, Jesus lifted the veil and showed us a man in Hades alive and conscious. But this parable, which stands alone, contains no new

revelation: it reflects the popular teaching of the time. It is evident, then, that upon so slender a word as Hades or Sheol no doctrine can be built. The second word of the R.V. replacing the A.V. word "hell" is the word "Tartarus." This word occurs twice only—in the second Epistle of Peter and the Epistle general of St. Jude. It is the heathen word for hell, and is even less clear than Sheol or Hades. Here, again, it is evident that no theology can be built upon it nor doctrine deduced from it. It is simply the heathen word for hell, and its meaning is left unexplained.

But there is a third and last word—the word "Gehenna." This occurs twelve times in the New Testament, eleven of these being in the first three Gospels. The significant thing is that in the Synoptists the word is reported as being spoken by Jesus. What does the word "Gehenna" mean? It is a picture word, and it has an historic origin. The word "Gehenna" is a shortened term for the Vale of Hinnom—Ge-Hinnom, a valley that lay to the south of Jerusalem. The story of this place is told in the second book of Chronicles, chapters xxviii.

and xxxiii. Long ago this Vale of Hinnom was a fair garden, where flowers and fruits and vegetables grew. Then, under two kings, it became a place of fearful idolatry. Little children were placed within a heated metal image and treated cruelly; they "passed through the fire." Men thought of Gehinnom with a shudder. When good King Josiah came to the throne he broke up that repulsive and cruel idolatry, and caused the vale to be held in horror. He "defiled it" effectually by making it the great refuse-heap of Jerusalem. Dead bodies were consumed in the vale. Fires were kept burning day and night on that immense pile.

When Jesus was upon earth the Vale of Hinnom was still employed in this way. Jerusalem, as we well know, fell in the year 70. The Jewish people were scattered. In the third century after Christ, Jerome tells us that Gehenna had once more reverted to its original use and had again become a garden. To-day the railway station of Jerusalem stands upon or close to the site. This, then, is the meaning of the word "Gehenna." Gehenna stood as a symbol of utter ruin. In this way our Lord Jesus Christ employed

it. When He cried to Tyre and Sidon, "You shall be brought down to Gehenna," He meant that they would be entirely destroyed; and, in truth, that was their fate. Our Lord also uses it as a warning. "If your right hand offends you, cut it off, for it is better for you to go into life maimed than for your whole body to go into Gehenna." Here Gehenna is used as an illustration. He means that it is better to go through life minus a hand or an eye or a foot than for the whole of the body to be destroyed on that rubbish-heap. Again and again He speaks in the same way. "You that are exalted to the highest shall be brought down to the Gehenna." It is worthy of note that the adjective "eternal" is never applied to "Gehenna." There is no expression "eternal Gehenna." Our Lord, in St. Matthew xviii., speaks about the "eternal fire," but to that I will return presently. So the words "Gehenna," "Tartarus," "Hades," and "Sheol" which lie behind the English word "hell" are simply picture words, and they give us no information whatever concerning the character or the duration of punishment in the life beyond.



There are other words, however, besides these to indicate the dark side of the life beyond. Our Lord speaks in Matthew xxv. 41 about the eternal "Eternal." fire. In Matthew xxv. 46 of "eternal punishment." In Matthew xxii. 13 of the "outer darkness." In Romans vi. 23 St. Paul speaks about the wages of sin being "death"; and in 2 Thessalonians i. 9 he speaks of punishment as "being eternal destruction." Here, then, are five phrases—"eternal fire," "eternal punishment," "outer darkness," "death," and "eternal destruction." Now, if we are to be strictly honest in Bible study, we must consider the whole of these words, and not one of them alone, ignoring in our caprice the remainder. If we take heed to all these words, one thing is clear, and that is, they cannot be exactly harmonized. Everlasting "punishing" cannot be harmonized with everlasting "destruction." And literal "fire" cannot be harmonized with "darkness," since fire implies a certain degree of light. You cannot have total darkness and fire at the same time and in the same place.

These great expressions are not intended

to be harmonized; they are all of them  
 phases of one great underlying  
 Symbolic truth—the truth of retribution.  
 Fire.

Further, they are not dogmatic statements, they are images. Throughout the Bible fire stands as the symbol of Divine vengeance against evil. The germ of the idea is evidently to be found in the fact of the destruction of Sodom. “Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, having given themselves over to fornication, are now suffering the punishment of eternal fire” (Jude 7). The starting point for the conception of fire as a symbol of Divine retribution is the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah. That terrible event set forth the Divine vengeance against sin. Fire stands also as a symbol of remorse. Have not men spoken of their brains being on fire? These two uses of the image represent two sides of the one truth: that God is hostile to evil, and that man suffers for committing it. Almighty God must by His nature be as a fire against evil. In God there is a necessary hostility towards sin. He would not be God if it were otherwise; and because God is love He must of necessity hate that evil which interferes with His

merciful programme for man. When the Bible represents God as a consuming fire, it states nothing capricious; it sets forth a necessity of the case. God must be a fire towards evil. Sin must be the object of His vengeance, of His hatred. He cannot love it. Fire, therefore, is a symbol of necessary vengeance against sin.

The second word is "punishment" (Matthew xxv. 46): "These shall go away into eternal punishment." That word "punishment" is also a picture word.

"Punishment."

The underlying Greek word "Kolasias" means a pruning, a cutting off. It is the image of a gardener who, with his knife, lops off useless branches. But whether the reference is to the process or to the effect is not defined. It is a picture word and no more. Just as the word "fire" is a symbol, so the word "punishment" also is a symbol. The third and last word is "darkness." What is the "outer darkness"? Darkness in the Bible stands as a symbol of two things—of definite evil and of the deprivation of good. "This is your hour, and the power of darkness." All evil is darkness—this is its posi-

"Darkness."

tive character. But it also signifies the deprivation of good. We say, idiomatically, "I am quite in the dark about this matter." To be in darkness is to be deprived of some good. Thus these three picture words symbolize something common which underlies them all—it is the truth of retribution.

Two of these words of Christ are qualified by the adjective "eternal." The fire is "eternal" and the punishment is "eternal."

We have seen in a previous lecture that the word "eternal" is not a time word. The "eternal" is not an indefinite extension of terrestrial years. The word "eternal" is an adjective of quality; it has to do with that which is outside time. Dr. Weymouth renders the phrase: "These shall go into the punishment of the ages." "These shall go into the fire of the ages." That is, they shall endure that retribution symbolized by fire, and pruning, which is proper to "the age to come." We must now go deeper

The Principles of Retribution.

than these words and pictures, to consider the principles of retribution as set forth by our Lord Jesus Christ. There are two passages in the New Testament in which our Lord tells

us all that we need to know about the future upon its dark side. He lays down principles which are eternal. The first passage is St. Luke xii. 47, 48: "And that servant which knew his lord's will, and made not ready, nor did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes; but he that knew not, and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes." That is the first principle. The second is in St. Matthew xii. 31, 32: "Therefore I say unto you, every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven. And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever shall speak against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this age nor in that which is to come." In these two passages the entire principles of retribution are set before us by Him who is infallible. In summary, our Lord declares that each man and woman is a steward for God. We are here to do God's will. The doing of God's will means blessedness. Disobedience to that will entails chastisement. The chastisement will be proportioned to

the fault, and the inference is that when the chastisement is completed it will be found to have been effective. But a warning is added, that for some it may never be effective.

This statement of the case fulfils the conditions we have seen to be necessary. It is at once scientific, ethical, and biblical. Let us look at these points. First disobedience to God's will entails chastisement. This is not arbitrary; it is a necessity of the case. God's will is the law for human life, and disobedience to that law, as to any law, involves chastisement. Obedience to the law of health means happiness and strength; disobedience means misery and disease. Obey the law of gravitation, and within its limits you may go where you will and enjoy the pleasures of the world. But defy that law and spring, say, from a high parapet and you will fall upon the pavement below a mangled body. This is not arbitrary; it is necessary. What is sin? It is disobedience to order, to God, to the law of life. It entails, of necessity, suffering, chastisement. The character of the retribution answers to the character of

The Reign  
of Law.

the sin. Effects resemble causes. Whatever a man sows that shall he reap—in kind. Exactly as we sow we reap. Sow wheat, and you reap wheat; sow peas, and you reap peas; sow oats, and you reap oats; sow evil, and you reap evil; sow virtue, and you reap virtue. The character of retribution in every case answers to the character of the sin. Now what is the consequence of disobedience to any law? Two things happen: we lose the good that it brings, and we gain the evil to which it is opposed. What is the chastisement for disobeying God's law in human life? This—we lose the good that God would give us, and we gain the evil from which His law would shield us. We lose light, love, holiness, and order, since God is these, and we gain their opposites. Instead of light we have darkness; instead of holiness, impurity; instead of love, hatred; instead of order, discord. That is retribution. It is less a whip lashing us from without and more a scourge lashing us from within. Retribution answers always to the character of the sin. And we must understand that retribution begins at the moment of the sin. Hell begins upon earth. The man who says "No" to

God loses light, order, love, and holiness here. He suffers here. "Myself am heaven or hell." And, once begun, it follows the law of increase: the process continues—the retribution deepens. Death does not arrest it. Death produces no change whatever in a person's character. The man wakes on the other side as he went to sleep on this side. Retribution continues there as it commences here.

But there is a difference of a certain kind, and this is indicated by Jesus in the parable of Dives and Lazarus. Jesus shows

What Death Does. us a man on the other side tormented in a flame—and crying for water wherewith to quench his thirst. We must not look for flame and water external to the man. The flame, the thirst, the anguish were in his soul. No fire burned him but that which he had himself kindled. During the whole of his life upon earth that rich man was thirsty in his soul; thirsty as all men are by virtue of their aspiring nature. He could have quenched his thirst by drinking at the true source. To meet his thirst there was a fountain of living water—a fountain which flows for every man. Instead of that



he lived an unreal life. He managed by artificial devices to stifle the cries of his deeper self. He clad his body with beautiful garments, he ate costly food, he lived an easy life, and never once did he heed the thirst of his real self. He was like a man given to drinking artificial stimulants. Upon those he lived. But a time comes when such a man cannot procure the stimulants. Then the flames of hell burn within him; he suffers like the man in the parable who cried, "I am tormented in this flame." That was the matter with the rich man. He was suddenly snatched away from his artificial life upon earth; he awoke to reality, and began to suffer. On the other side there are none of those material things by means of which we can now drug our souls against reality. On the other side we shall wake to reality. Retribution continues here upon this earth plane, but many do not recognise that it is retribution, because their souls are drugged. But when the spirit, freed from its partnership with the flesh, passes into the spirit world, the awakening comes, and with the awakening to reality, suffering. Scientifically and ethically, then, this first statement is

absolutely unassailable—viz., that all opposition to the law of God involves us in chastisement.

The second statement is that chastisement is proportioned to the fault. Some, our Lord

The Law of  
Proportion.

tells us, will be beaten with many stripes, and some with few stripes.

This is a principle of equity. Equality of chastisement for inequality of crime is unjust. No judge would dream of administering exactly the same punishment for every class of crime. This, also, is the principle of Divine chastisement. The Bible is emphatic on this point; our Lord's words are as clear as words can be: some shall be beaten with few stripes, and others with many. "It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you." "More tolerable" for some than for others! All are not placed on a dead level. Hear St. Paul: "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ to receive . . . according to that we have done, whether it be good or bad." "According to"—that is the rule of judgment.

The idea, then, of one common hell, into which all will be thrown indiscriminately,

is unscientific, unethical, and unbiblical. There can be no one common hell, into which all pass, since the principle of equity declares that differences of guilt demand different degrees of chastisement. That is our Lord's own principle—"Many stripes and few stripes"; and there is no appeal from Him—at least for a Christian.

No Common  
Hell.

The third point in our Lord's statement enables us to infer that for the many the chastisement will be effective. The statement is certainly not dogmatic, but it is inferential. It is inferred from our Lord's own words concerning the few and the many stripes. We are bound to ask questions here. One man is beaten with fewer stripes than another. Then, when those few stripes have been laid on—what next? Is he to be kept in hell for ever? Does not release follow expiation? The Bible does not dogmatically say this, but the inference is clear. When the "stripes" are over the retribution is accomplished. Would it be right to continue the "whipping"?

The inference is clear, and it appeals to our intellect, heart, and conscience.

It is an inference also from the Bible statements concerning the triumph of good: "He shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied." "I will draw all men unto Myself." "God shall be all and all." "He wills all to be saved." The Good Shepherd went after the lost one "until He found it." What is the meaning of all this?

It is inferred, too, from the nature of the chastisement. Chastisement amongst ourselves is often the result of sudden anger, and afterwards we are sorry for what we have inflicted. But in God there is no access of temper, no vindictiveness. The principle of God's chastisement is set forth by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews: "He chastens for our profit that we may be partakers of His holiness." God never chastises for the sake of wounding, and never in ill temper. God's chastisements are paternal, and always with a view to a cure. The inference from this is that for the many the chastisement will be effective. Some may make an ill use of this, and "take their chance," as they say. But a man who deliberately does evil on this side, idly trusting in the mercy of God, deserves all he gets on the other side. He is

contemptible beyond words who lives a life of evil in this world wounding himself and others, while he secretly believes, against all law and reason, that his crimes will, in some mysterious way, be generously overlooked. Do not forget the law of habit. The longer a necessary duty is postponed, the harder it becomes to fulfil. No man without repentance and faith will ever see God.

The terms of salvation are the same in every world, and will never be made easier. It is senseless and shameful to cling to a "larger hope," while refusing to do the present duty.

Yet, while the inference is that for the many the chastisement will be effective, our Lord also warns us that one sin has no forgiveness in "this age or in that which is to come." I have already reminded you that the Bible does not deal with the ultimate goal of all things concerning man. It limits its revelation to "this age and that which is to come." Upon what is beyond that, it is idle to speculate. We have to face the practical fact that there is a sin which will not be forgiven in this or in the next age. To whom did Jesus say this terrible word? Not

to the poor unfortunates who have been driven into the lazar house through the base passions of men: not to the victims of hereditary taint: not to the slum dweller, the publican, and the socially disinherited. For these He had, and has, an infinite compassion. But He said it to Scribes and Pharisees, to people who were steeped in hypocrisy and pride, who, when they beheld the beneficent works of the Redeemer, were so bigoted and base and hypocritical that they dared to attribute His magnificent work to the agency of the devil. They said of the fairest Man that ever lived upon our planet that He was an agent of the devil. That is blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. It is the final confusion of good and evil. And forgiveness is extended in vain to men who cannot discern between a devil and the Spirit of God.

Jesus does not say that any one had committed that sin, but He warns us that such a sin is possible. It is a warning, not a threat. Evil may become a permanent habit of life. There may be people upon whom even chastisement makes no impression. In this life a man may become a confirmed thief, drunkard, liar. And a man may become a confirmed hater of

God and of the good. If so, forgiveness can make no appeal to him, not because God is unwilling, but because there is no material for Him to work on. Our Lord says it is possible for a man so to confuse good and evil that even the eternal God can make no impression upon him.

Beyond this the Bible does not go. It gives no complete details about the life to come, but it offers principles which are scientific and irrefutable. Its emphasis is ever placed upon the solemnity of living. Christ came to bestow life upon men: to cause them to fulfil the end of their existence. And it is to that life that I now, in His name, call you. Here and now, upon this earth plane, is our grand opportunity to serve God, to be true Christians, and to submit to the glorious mastership of Christ. Here Jesus Christ can make us what we ought to be. Practical wisdom says, "Achieve your salvation now." "Behold, now is the accepted time. Behold, now is the day of salvation." Come to Christ now. The hour is propitious. "And him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out."

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